

THE AMARNA AGE

OTHER VOLUMES
BY REV. JAMES BAIKIE, F.R.A.S.

THE LIFE OF THE ANCIENT EAST

**Being some Chapters of the Romance of
 Modern Exploration.**

With 32 full-page illustrations from photographs.
 Demy 8vo., cloth.

THE STORY OF THE PHARAOHS

A Short History of Ancient Egypt.

Third edition, with 32 full-page illustrations from photographs,
 and 49 illustrations in the text.
 Large crown 8vo., cloth.

THE SEA-KINGS OF CRETE

And the Prehistoric Civilisation of Greece.

Fourth edition, with 32 full-page illustrations from photographs,
 a sketch-map of Crete, and a plan of the Palace of Knossos.
 Large crown 8vo., cloth.

LANDS & PEOPLES OF THE BIBLE

A Handbook for Bible Students.

With 48 full-page illustrations from photographs.
 Crown 8vo., cloth.

PEEPS AT ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS

Each with 16 full-page illustrations—8 of them in colour.
 Large crown 8vo., cloth.

ANCIENT ASSYRIA ANCIENT CRETE
 ANCIENT EGYPT ANCIENT GREECE
 ANCIENT ROME

THE BIBLE STORY

**A Connected Narrative retold from
 Holy Scripture**

With 50 full-page illustrations in colour.
 Super royal 8vo., cloth.

PUBLISHED BY A. & C. BLACK, LTD., 4 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W. 1.

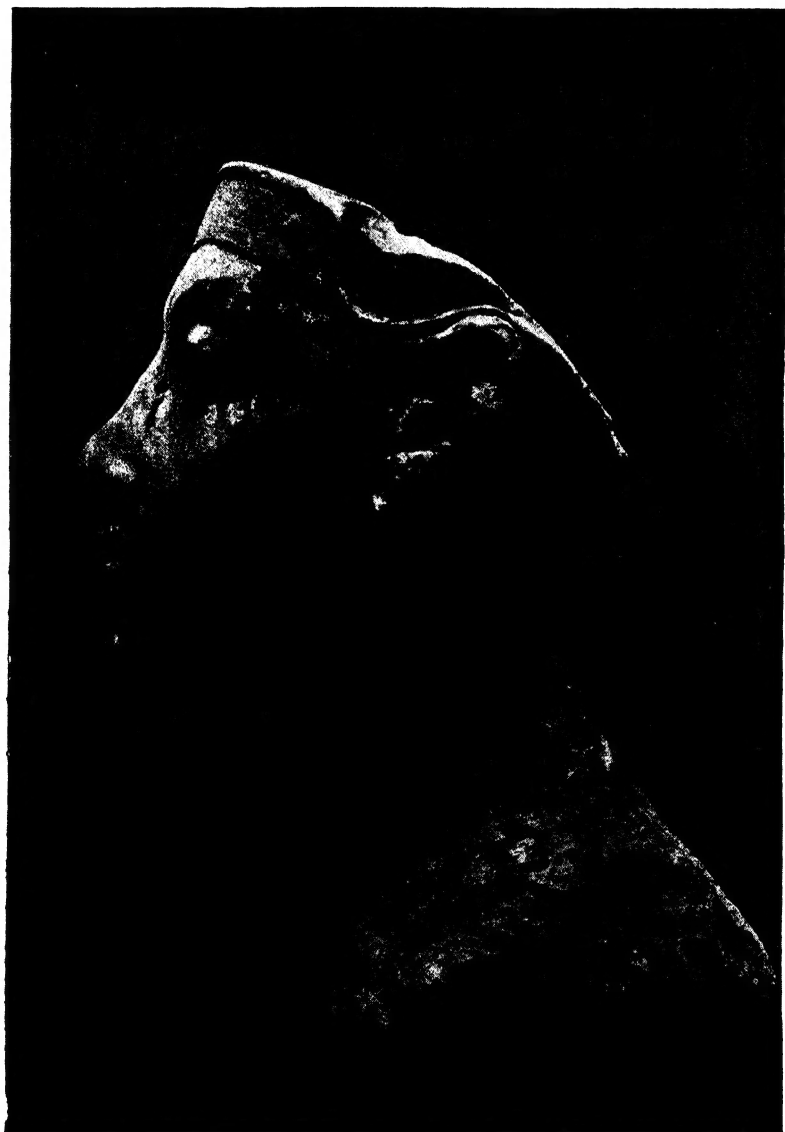
AGENTS

AMERICA **THE MACMILLAN COMPANY**
 60 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

AUSTRALASIA . . . **OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS**
 205 FLINDERS LANE, MELBOURNE

CANADA **THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF CANADA, LTD.**
 ST. MARTIN'S HOUSE, 70 BOND STREET, TORONTO, 2

INDIA **MACMILLAN AND COMPANY, LTD.**
 275 HORNEY ROAD, BOMBAY
 294 BOW BAZAR STREET, CALCUTTA
 NORTH BEACH ROAD, MADRAS



PORTRAIT-BUST OF AKHENATEN (p. 243)
From Fechheimer's "Die Plastik der Ägypter" (Cassirer)

THE AMARNA AGE

A STUDY OF
THE CRISIS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

BY

REV. JAMES BAIKIE, F.R.A.S.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF THE ANCIENT EAST," "THE STORY OF
THE PHARAOKHS," "THE SEA-KINGS OF CRETE," ETC.

WITH A PREFACE BY

STANLEY A. COOK, LITT.D.

JOINT EDITOR OF "THE CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY"

WITH THIRTY-TWO FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

A. & C. BLACK, LTD.

4, 5 & 6 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W. 1

1926

Printed in Great Britain.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTORY - - - - -	I
I.	EGYPT'S RISE TO SUPREMACY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD	12
II.	THE CULMINATION OF EGYPTIAN GLORY: THE REIGN OF AMENHOTEP THE MAGNIFICENT - - -	62
III.	EGYPTIAN CULTURE IN THE XVIIIITH DYNASTY -	102
IV.	THE SURROUNDING NATIONS: THE MINOANS - -	146
V.	THE SURROUNDING NATIONS: THE HITTITES AND THE MITANNIANS - - - - -	180
VI.	THE SURROUNDING NATIONS: THE BABYLONIANS AND THE ASSYRIANS - - - - -	210
VII.	THE NEW SUPREME JOVE OF THE ANCIENT EAST— AMENHOTEP IV. - - - - -	231
VIII.	THE CITY OF THE HORIZON AND ITS ART - -	263
IX.	THE FAITH OF AKHENATEN—ATEN-WORSHIP - -	303
X.	THE COLLAPSE OF THE EGYPTIAN EMPIRE AS SEEN IN THE AMARNA LETTERS - - - - -	342
XI.	THE AFTERMATH OF THE TELL EL-AMARNA ADVENTURE	392
XII.	THE LEGATEES OF EL-AMARNA: THE PHARAOHS OF THE XIXTH DYNASTY - - - - -	424
	INDEX - - - - -	459

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE		<i>Frontispiece</i>
I.	Portrait Bust of Akhenaten - - - -	FACING PAGE
II.	Head of Thothmes III. - - - -	58
III.	Head of Amenhotep III. - - - -	65
IV.	Head of Queen Tiye - - - -	80
V.	Marriage and Hunting Scarabs of Amenhotep III. -	97
VI.	Letter of Tushratta of Mitanni to Amenhotep III. -	112
VII.	XVIIIth Dynasty Types—An Official and his Wife -	129
VIII.	Egyptian Galley of the Empire - - - -	144
IX.	Hittite Hieroglyphs - - - -	161
X.	Hittite Types - - - -	176
XI.	Hittite Sculptures—Iasili Kaya - - - -	193
XII.	The Lion Gates, Mycenæ and Boghaz-Keui - -	208
XIII.	Assyrian and Hittite Animal Sculpture - - -	213
XIV.	Portrait Statue of Senusert III. - - - -	220
XV.	Bust of Nefertiti - - - -	241
XVI.	Head of Nefertiti - - - -	256
XVII.	Boundary Stele of Akhetaten - - - -	261
XVIII.	Painted Pavement, Tell el-Amarna - - - -	268
XIX.	Tiye, Akhenaten, and Nefertiti at Table - -	273
XX.	Stele of Hor and Sutekh - - - -	288
XXI.	Adoration of the Aten - - - -	293
XXII.	A Courtier's Tomb, Tell el-Amarna - - - -	300
XXIII.	Head of Akhenaten - - - -	305
XXIV.	Head of one of Akhenaten's Daughters - -	320
XXV.	Relief Sculpture, el-Amarna - - - -	337
XXVI.	Amorite Types - - - -	352
XXVII.	Syrian Types - - - -	369
XXVIII.	Death-Mask of Akhenaten - - - -	384
XXIX.	Coffin of Akhenaten - - - -	401
XXX.	Head of Akhenaten—Canopic Jar - - - -	416
XXXI.	Statue of Tutankhamen - - - -	421
XXXII.	Huy presenting Tribute to Tutankhamen - -	428

LIST OF MAPS

	FACING PAGE
1. Palestine, Syria, and Phœnicia in the XVIIIth Dynasty, after the Egyptian Monuments - - - - -	15
2. Lands and Nations of the Near East - - - -	39
3. Syria, after the Amarna Letters - - - -	343
4. Trade Routes in Palestine and Phœnicia - - - -	358
5. Syria, Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Babylonia - - -	458

PREFACE

BY

STANLEY A. COOK, LITT.D.,

*Fellow and Lecturer in the Comparative Study of Religions and in Hebrew
and Syriac, Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge*

THIS book is "a study of the crisis of the ancient world." Certain ages stand out as great landmarks in the history of the world, turning-points in that long road which has been trod by man in his upward ascent. No doubt it is true that every age has its crisis, or that we distinguish ages by some particular crisis which was pregnant with great issues ; yet, just as in a campaign where every day brings something vital, certain battles are of decisive importance, so we are justified in treating some ages as being in every way of more fundamental significance than the rest. Of such ages, that of the birth of Christianity is clearly one, though it is only one. There are others which, like the rise and spread of Islam, or like the Reformation, also have a universal significance which would immediately be granted. And there remain others, less known, whose true significance could hardly be recognised until the growing and rather miscellaneous accumulation of knowledge concerning the ancient world had been classified and arranged.

For the increased interest in the more remote history of man various explanations can be found. Intelligent curiosity as to the early beginnings of the race accounts

Preface

both for the ancient mythologies and for their more sedate modern equivalents. The interest in biblical history has not been wholly a religious one, though the earnest endeavours to co-ordinate Old Testament events with the more sensational discoveries in the "Bible lands," such as that of the tomb of Tutankhamen, are not without significance. Nor is it merely fortuitous that the three great ages in pre-Christian times which seem to stand out above all others were also recognised by biblical historians as ages of outstanding importance for their own national history. Of these three ages, the first is that of Hammurabi and the First Babylonian Dynasty and of the flourishing XIIth Dynasty of Egypt—roughly it is the age to which tradition evidently ascribed Abraham and the beginning of the patriarchal history. The third age is that of the middle of the first millennium B.C.—roughly the age of the Exile and the reconstruction, or rather the inauguration, of Judaism. The second is of about the fourteenth century B.C.—roughly the age of Mosaism and the traditional beginning of Israel as a people ; and it forms the subject of this book.

Much has been written about this age, the age of Tutankhamen and his more illustrious predecessor Akhenaten—spellings vary, some prefer Ikhnaton—and his notorious monotheistic zeal. It was an age of widespread intercourse and feverish activity ; and we of to-day are able to understand it better than the men of old, because we can see, as they could not, the confusion and disintegration which prevailed over so large a part of the ancient world, and recognise, in a way that was impossible for them, the factors and tendencies which were to overcome the rest. Of this age the city of Amarna stands

Preface

out as a symbol—the holy city built by Akhenaten, with its paintings and its indications of intercourse with Crete and South-West Asia, and, not least, with its many cuneiform tablets, the discovery of which revolutionised our knowledge of the ancient east. So the “Amarna Age” is a handy and sufficiently intelligible label for the pigeon-hole in which to collect and arrange our scattered information of a stirring and troublous age—and let those who cavil at the term fire their first shots at the handy though even less justifiable term “Minoan”!

Mr. Baikie's account of the Amarna Age is “a study of *the* crisis of the ancient world,” and I italicise the definite article because it is entirely accurate. When we consider the Cretans and Hittites, the powers of Babylonia and Assyria, and the internal conditions in Syria and Palestine, it can hardly be doubted that the reign of Akhenaten marks a turning-point, not only in Egyptian history, but also in the wider history of the ancient world. Mr. Baikie's aim has been to reproduce this age, to show us the intensely human interest that lies in the story of religion and art, of decadence and reform, of hectic policies and subtle intrigues, of widespread social and political unrest, and of movement leading to permanent social and political changes.

Were our sources fuller we should no doubt have light upon the internal economic vicissitudes; we should hear of the prophets and propagandists of the age. We of to-day are more alive to the necessity of looking at historical figures and events from different angles; and although the Amarna Age is relatively speaking richly documented, the very nature of the crisis and the character of the hero of the age—if he is the hero and

Preface

not the villain—make us more keenly sensible of the obscurities in the story. The hero—again, *if* he is the hero—is the revolutionary king, the religious reformer, Akhenaten ; and he is the centre of controversy to-day, as he certainly was thirty-three centuries ago. Indeed, it is even doubtful whether, in spite of centuries, modern methods of treating the man are as unimpassioned and as free from prejudice as might be expected.

Akhenaten is one of the few religious reformers of early days of whom—rather unfortunately for him—we have a fair amount of contemporary testimony. In the first place, his personal appearance excites unfavourable comment (see below, Plates XXI. and XXIII., and pp. 294, 295), and, what is more, he seems to have been proud of displaying himself as he really was. However, all said and done, he was probably more handsome than Socrates, or—to judge from apocryphal tradition—St. Paul ; though no doubt it can be maintained that there is something decadent about the looks of the unfortunate youth and his sister-wife Nefertiti. Then, too, he lifts the veil upon his private life in a way which men of genius are rarely wont to do, and his life, though morally irreproachable, has a certain ultra-domesticity which suffers from being paraded. It is out of place when an empire is going to the dogs. Furthermore, Akhenaten comes before us as a hearty eater, a trait of some interest when we recall how Mohammed has been stigmatised a gormandiser, how Buddha has been defended from a similar charge, and how the Son of Man was called “a gluttonous man and a winebibber.” The point is of interest for the psychology of genius, and it may be noticed in passing that Sir James Frazer has drawn

Preface

attention to the excessive hunger of the Tongan inspired priests ("The Belief in Immortality," vol. ii., p. 78 *sq.*). Again, Akhenaten has been condemned for his pacificism, though the deeper we plunge into his age the more difficult is it to see what the "strong man" of the day, had he the necessary backing, could have accomplished. Finally, even his reforming movement is now found to have been not so original as had been thought, and it proves easy to strip him of all originality, much in the same way that other and greater figures in the history of religion have suffered at the hands of their critics.

The truth is that Akhenaten is precisely one of those figures that tempt writers to go to extremes; and the excessive enthusiasm on the part of some will probably account for the occasionally rather irascible and quite unscientific and prejudiced onslaughts of others. Akhenaten, his religion and his age, deserve a far more disinterested study; and I am glad that Mr. Baikie has criticised those Egyptologists who urge that Akhenaten's god was the actual material sun, and not some profounder power of which the sun was regarded as the vehicle or symbol (p. 317). It has to be remembered that the Oriental religions raise some very profound and fundamental problems of religion, which turn upon philological acumen as little or as much as a competent knowledge of Hebrew guarantees a just appreciation of the prophets of Israel. The fact is that the Amarna Age raises some intensely absorbing and "big" questions. There are questions of the interpretation and of the real value of ancient religion, of the reason why a particular religious reform fails or succeeds, of the part played by that reform in making or marring an empire, and ultimately in affecting the course

Preface

of subsequent history ; there are questions of the extent to which, at some critical age, a single individual is, or is held to be, responsible for steps far more fateful than he could ever have imagined ; there are questions of the personal character of such individuals, and the extent of their originality. . . .

It is on such grounds as these that the Amarna Age, which has in it much that appeals to diverse interests, has a peculiar value for us who live in another crucial age ; and it has long had a fascination for me as a landmark in the history of thought (*cf.* "Cambridge Ancient History," vol. ii., p. 399 *sq.*). Accordingly, it was a source of considerable gratification to me when, after hearing Mr. Baikie lecture on Ancient Egypt at the Summer School at Cambridge in August, 1924, I was able to induce him to make the Amarna Age the subject of the next of his excellent books. I have followed the preparation of the volume throughout with the greatest interest. It will, of course, be understood that there are cases where he and I are not in agreement : naturally there is often room for difference of opinion as regards points of detail or interpretation. But so important does the subject seem to me that I have felt it to be in every way desirable that Mr. Baikie should give his own conception of it. I will only say that I know of no other book so well calculated to enable readers to form their own judgment, and see the Amarna Age from within, as part of universal history.

Biblical students will not fail to notice how very slightly the Old Testament and the history of Israel come upon the stage. This is because our knowledge of early Israel is so slight ; and it proves difficult to correlate what the

Preface

history-writers of Israel had to say with what we gain from external and contemporary monuments. This is undoubtedly a disappointment ; and we can only hope that archæology and the monuments will one day restore the lost pages of Israelite history. Yet it is necessary to emphasise the important fact that it is at or about the Amarna Age that Israelite tradition placed the work of Moses and the beginning of Israel as a nation. Biblical students will always disagree as to how much of the Pentateuch is of Mosaic origin ; but while I, for my part, am convinced that it is, in its present form, many centuries later than the Amarna Age, nothing can destroy the very significant fact that the rise of Israel is, roughly speaking, contemporary with that age, and that the decay and death, and the weakness and collapse that mark the last centuries of the second millennium B.C., witnessed the beginning of a new growth which was of incalculable value for the history of religion.

In this way, the Amarna Age, of supreme value for universal history, has a unique importance also for the biblical student, who will see here the environment of early Palestine, the ideas that were current, and the background upon which he has to place his conceptions of the early growth of the people of Israel.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE fulness with which Dr. Cook, in his preface, has explained the importance of the Amarna Age relieves me of the necessity of adding anything as to the scope and object of the book. I desire, however, to express here my great indebtedness to him, not only for thus introducing my work to the public, but also for constant help and encouragement. The inception of the book was due to him, and its execution has owed a great deal to his suggestions and criticisms, while the fact that the whole text passed through his hands twice, once in typescript and once in proof, is sufficient evidence of the reality of his helpfulness.

At the same time I wish to emphasise the fact that Dr. Cook has no responsibility either for the views expressed or for the accuracy or inaccuracy of any of the details. Responsibility in these respects rests with myself alone. While we were at one, in the main, in our conception of the period, there were points, as he has indicated, on which we were not altogether agreed, and the truest statement of the facts would be that while the book owes to Dr. Cook much of whatever merit it may possess, he is by no means to be saddled with its demerits.

I wish further to express my thanks to the various societies or individuals who have granted permission to use the originals of a number of the illustrations. Detailed acknowledgment of their kindness is made in each case on the plate concerned.

SYNCHRONISTIC TABLE

B.C.	<i>Egypt.</i>	<i>Babylonia and Assyria.</i>
1600.	Expulsion of Hyksos.	Kassites in power at Babylon.
1580.	Aahmes, XVIIIth Dynasty begins.	
1540.	Thothmes I. raids to Euphrates.	
1500.	Thothmes III. Wars in Syria.	
1479.	Battle of Megiddo. Gifts from the Hittites and Assyria. Embassies from the Keftiu.	
1461.		Buraburiash I. Puzur-ashir IV., embassy to Thothmes III.
1450.	Amenhotep II. Syrian war.	
1420.	Thothmes IV. marries Mitannian Princess, Mutemuya.	Kurigalzu II. Entente with Egypt.
1410.	Amenhotep III. Culmination of Egyptian splendour. Intermarriages with Mitanni and Babylon.	Buraburiash II. Ashur-nadin-akhi.
1375.	Amenhotep IV. (Akhenaten.) Religious revolution. Capital at Amarna. Amarna letters. Decline of Egyptian Empire in Asia.	Kadashman-Kharbe, letters to Akhenaten. Ashur-uballit, and the increase of Assyrian power.
1360.	Tutankhamen. Reaction and return to Thebes. Attempt to regain control in Palestine.	Kurigalzu III. defeated by Assyria. Decline of Kassite power. Extension of Assyrian power under Enlil-nirari.
1350.	Horemheb. Complete restoration of Amenism. Internal reforms in Egypt. Treaty with Hittites.	Arik-den-ilu extends Assyrian influence.
1315.	Seti I. Recovers Palestine and Hauran. Treaty with Hittites.	Adad-nirari I. defeats the Kassites.
1292.	Ramses II. Wars in Palestine and Syria.	Kadashman-Turgu, alliance with Hittites against Assyrians.
1288.	Battle of Kadesh.	
1272.	Treaty with Hittites under Hattushilish III.	Tukulti-ninurta I. (Tukulti-ninib) conquests.
1260.	Marriage of Ramses to Hittite Princess, and visit of Hattushilish III.	

OF THE AMARNA AGE

<i>Mitanni, Syria, and Palestine.</i>	<i>The Hittites.</i>	<i>Ægean Area.</i>
		Late Minoan I. Rebuilding of Knossos. Shaft-grave Dynasty at Mycenæ.
	Murshilish I. captures Babylon?	Troy, Sixth City. Keftiu in Egypt. Beehive tombs at Mycenæ.
Mitanni powerful under the Shaushshatar line. Palestine and Syria under Egyptian control.		
Daughter of Artatama marries Thothes IV. Palestine under Egyptian control.		
	Shubbiluliuma.	Late Minoan II. Destruction of Knossos. Extension of Mycenæan power.
Tushratta murdered by Artatama. Mattiuaza succeeds by Hittite help. Decline of Egyptian control in Palestine.	Intrigues of Shubbiluliuma against Egypt and Mitanni. Supports Mattiuaza, and diverts Mitannian support from Egypt to Hatti.	Earlier activities of the Sea-peoples.
	Treaty with Egypt by Shubbiluliuma or Murshilish II.	
Palestine recovered to Egyptian control.	Muwatallish makes treaty with Egypt.	
	Muwatallish fights battle of Kadesh. Murder of Muwatallish.	
	Hattushilish III. Treaty with Egypt.	
	Gradual decline of Hittite power.	

THE AMARNA AGE

A STUDY OF THE CRISIS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

INTRODUCTORY

AT a point on the east bank of the Nile, about 190 miles, by river, south of Cairo, and nearly 300 miles north of Thebes, the eastern mountains, which from Mellawi to Manfalut rise so directly from the river-bank as to leave no room for cultivation or habitation, recede for a distance of about six miles, and leave a small plain between the Nile and the rising ground having a maximum breadth of three miles. Within this little bay of the hills lie several Arab villages, et-Til, Hagg Qandil, el-Amarieh, Hawata, and Qoser. On the west bank lies another village which still retains the name of the Arab tribe, the Beni Amran, which in 1737 settled down here on both sides of the river. From this tribe the district early acquired the name of "el-Amarna," and the Danish traveller Norden, who visited the neighbourhood in 1737, says that the natives used the name "Bene Amraen" or "Omarne" to describe the whole tract in which the villages named are situated. From the name of the village, et-Til, it was an easy step to the corruption (in this case) "Tell," and Wilkinson was the first to apply this corruption to the Amarna part of the name, and to make up the title Tell el-Amarna. Really the name Tell

The Amarna Age

is a misnomer, as there is nothing of the nature of a true Tell, or mound, at the spot, and indeed the complete title is a kind of portmanteau word which cannot be justified on any grounds whatever ; but it has become so firmly rooted in general use that any attempt to depart from it would only result in confusion. "Tell el-Amarna," says N. de Garis Davies, "is now a name as familiar to the visitor as it is strange to the inhabitants."

The site was well-known to the early explorers of the treasure-house of ancient Egypt, and Lepsius and Wilkinson among others have devoted attention to the remarkable relics of the past to be found in its rock-tombs ; but it was not till 1887 that Tell el-Amarna rose into prominence, and that the extraordinary interest of its past history began to be made manifest. In that year a peasant woman of the neighbourhood, grubbing among the ruins of the site for the nitrous earth (*sebakh*), which is the result of the decomposition of the mud-brick walls of ancient buildings, and which is of great fertilising value, found in a small store-chamber—"the place of the records of the palace of the king," as it was named on stamped bricks—a large number of baked clay tablets, inscribed with the cuneiform writing of Babylonia. She disposed of her interest in the find to a neighbour for the magnificent sum of ten piastres, or two shillings ; and at first it seemed as if she had the best of the bargain, for it proved by no means an easy task to find purchasers for the tablets, which are neither imposing nor beautiful. They were shown, to begin with, to dealers, who sent some of them to Dr. Oppert at Paris, and received the verdict that they were forgeries. "Others," says Sir Flinders Petrie, "were sent to M. Grebaut, then head of the Depart-

Introductory

ment of Antiquities, and were treated by him with customary silence. At last, when they were supposed to be almost worthless, a quantity were carried in sacks to Luqsor to hawk about among the dealers there, and these were largely ground to pieces on the way. What has been preserved, therefore, is but a wreck of what might have been, had any person equal to the occasion placed his hand upon them in time." Finally, when much of the store had perished in this miserable fashion, the value of the find began to be recognised, and the bulk of the material was bought up by the British and Berlin Museums, a few tablets drifting to St. Petersburg, to Paris, and to various private collections.

Such is the lamentable story of what is probably by far the most important discovery made within the last half-century in Egypt, or indeed in any of the lands of the ancient East. For the three hundred and fifty or so tablets which survived the rude treatment to which ignorance and prejudice had subjected them turned out to be nothing less than the diplomatic correspondence of the Egyptian Foreign Office during two of the most interesting and vital reigns of Egyptian history, and the information contained in them has been like a searchlight flashed on the history and the life, not of Egypt alone, but of almost all the other great nations of the ancient world. Babylon, the Hittites, Assyria, Mitanni, Cyprus, (or perhaps Cilicia), the Amorites—all are represented; while it may be, though as yet it is far from certain, that in the mentions of one of the raiding tribes of the time we have the first record of the young Hebrew people making its first appearance on the stage of the Promised Land. Nor is the interest of this ancient correspondence merely

The Amarna Age

historical ; almost more fascinating is the disclosure of the life of the time in the different countries concerned, of the mental outlook and the standards of the royalties, princes and governors who defile before us through the letters, and of some of whom we feel, when we have read their unconscious self-revelation, that we know them more intimately than most of the people whom we meet in casual intercourse day by day.

It is curious to contrast this really epoch-making discovery with the wonderful find which, since the end of 1922, has drawn the eyes of the whole world to Egypt. The finding of the tomb of Tutankhamen has been surrounded with almost every circumstance of interest which was denied to the discovery of the Record Office at Tell el-Amarna. It was made so widely public that the whole world felt aggrieved, if, on coming down to its breakfast on any particular morning, it was not greeted with the account of fresh wonders from the tomb in the Valley of the Kings ; its results were dealt with, not in the haphazard manner which caused the loss of so much of the Amarna treasure, but with a care, and an application of all the resources of modern science which left nothing to be desired ; while the splendour of the numberless articles of use and luxury which emerged from the dark cave of the Libyan hills has left all description far behind. To compare the glittering magnificence of the funerary furniture of Tutankhamen, with its blaze of gold and inlay and costly stones, with the insignificance of the little clay oblongs of Tell el-Amarna, scratched with their monotonous array of arrow-headed characters and looking like nothing so much as a lot of stale dog-biscuits, seems ridiculous ; yet there can be no

Introductory

doubt that to the serious student of the past the paltry-looking Amarna tablets outweigh all the glories of Tutankhamen's tomb, or indeed of half a dozen such tombs, if they could be found. From some points of view, and especially in connection with the history and development of Egyptian art and craftsmanship, the material from the tomb of Tutankhamen, when we are in a position to realise and appreciate its full significance, will doubtless prove of an importance which can scarcely be overrated ; but even so, this cannot for a moment be placed on the same plane as the contribution to our knowledge yielded by the letters. We knew already the quality of Egyptian craftsmanship, both in design and execution, and we knew that, though something of the freshness of inspiration had gone with the early days of the Old Kingdom, the Egyptian artist and craftsman never reached a higher level than in the gorgeous days of the later XVIIIth Dynasty, when Amenhotep III. held his glittering court at Thebes, and the envoys of all the princes of the ancient world, and often the princes themselves, bowed down in the dust before his golden sandals. The glories of Tutankhamen's throne and funeral canopies extra-illustrate, so to speak, a theme which was already pretty familiar to the student of Egyptian art, and so far they are valuable ; but the Amarna tablets have made a whole age live anew before our eyes—an infinitely greater matter.

The discovery of the tablets drew the eyes of all the students of the ancient culture of the Near East to the deserted site from which such precious material had come. In 1891 Professor Flinders Petrie began his excavations on the site, which resulted in the discovery of the famous

The Amarna Age

painted pavements of the palace of Amenhotep IV., or Akhenaten, together with much evidence as to the sumptuous and beautiful decoration of the royal chambers, and the industries of faïence and coloured glass which were characteristic of the place, and maintained it in life for a short while, even after the royal presence had been withdrawn from it. From 1907 to 1914 the site was occupied by the excavators of the German Expedition, who did a great deal of important clearing of the town ruins and the houses of some of the magnates, and whose most striking reward was the very remarkable set of heads of Akhenaten himself, his beautiful wife Nefertiti, and the princesses his daughters, which are now known as the Amarna heads over all the world, and, together with the slabs in coloured relief which have come from the site, have revealed to us a new chapter of wonderful power and charm in the history of Egyptian art. Lastly, in 1921 and subsequent years, came the expedition of the Egypt Exploration Society, under Peet, Woolley, and others, which continued the clearing of the town, discovered the ancient village where dwelt the workmen who excavated and sculptured the wonderful rock-tombs of Amarna, and provided the most complete reconstruction which is now possible of the short-lived city, which was the scene of one of the most remarkable spiritual adventures of which history has preserved any record.

Side by side with excavation went the study of all the material which began to flow in from various sources. Chief of these were the sculptures and inscriptions of the rock-tombs of the place, and the remarkable set of fourteen stelæ, sculptured and inscribed, with which Akhenaten had marked out the limits of his Holy City.

Introductory

The tombs were already fairly well known from the descriptions and pictures of Lepsius and Wilkinson, and the results of this fact had been disastrous. Once it was known that there was interest and saleable material on the site, not only was the town area ransacked of all that was portable and marketable, but the reliefs in the rock-tombs themselves were also attacked by an enterprising native of the village of et-Til, who hacked out from them such fragments as were most easily obtainable, or most attractive; and the work of the Mission Archéologique Française, and especially that of the Egypt Exploration Fund, directed by N. de Garis Davies, did not come any too soon to save these priceless records of the past from senseless destruction.

The supreme importance of all the material which was thus gathered lay, not in its artistic value, though that was often great, but in the evidence which it afforded of the details of the great religious revolution whose existence had been dimly apprehended by the earlier students of Egyptian history and archæology—a revolution which, though much still remains to be searched out with regard to it, is now one of the most fully studied and elaborately illustrated incidents of ancient history. We know now, not only that Tell el-Amarna represents the attempt of the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV., or Akhenaten, to overthrow the traditional religion of Egypt, and to substitute for it a more or less spiritual monotheism; but the details of this ill-fated effort, of the life and the teaching of the gifted and unfortunate man who made it, and of the almost unmitigated disaster in which his attempt closed, have gradually been coming to light. There is no period of Egyptian history, or of ancient

The Amarna Age

with the archives of Amarna and Boghaz-Keui, it has at least proved singularly illuminative with regard to the character and culture of the Amorite race which was dominant at this time in the land ; while by the light of the Amarna letters we can trace with comparative clearness the course of the events which in a single reign changed the whole orientation of Palestinian and Syrian politics.

The whole wonderful story culminates, for the present, with the glories of the tomb of Tutankhamen, in which, as it were, the splendour of a dying age has been summed up for our instruction, and we learn how rich, how various, and how luxurious was the culture and the artistry of the race which, in the reign of Akhenaten, missed the flood-tide of its imperial destiny, henceforward, in spite of the manful efforts of such Pharaohs as Seti I. and Ramses II. and III., to find the voyage of its life bound in shallows and in miseries. The work of Tutankhamen's tomb tells us how worthy and how well qualified to lead the world was the Egypt of 1350 B.C. ; the Amarna tablets and tomb pictures and inscriptions tell us how it was that, so qualified, she failed in the hour of crisis to know the day of her visitation, and left the task to hands, stronger perhaps, but certainly guided by a coarser and less generous inspiration. And this book is an attempt to retell for the ordinary reader the story of the great international crisis which determined the destiny of the ancient world, and of the spiritual crisis within the national life of Egypt, the dominant power of the time, which determined the Egyptian contribution to the shaping of events. The earliest stage of our task, and the necessary preliminary to our study of the history of the actual crisis, must be an

Introductory

attempt to trace the manner in which Egypt had arrived at the position of dominance in which we find her at the beginning of the Amarna Age, to indicate the elements within the Egyptian state which were already, even before the accession of the protagonist of the new order, working in the same line which he followed, to survey briefly the achievement of Egyptian culture at this period, which marks at least one of the culminating peaks of its record, and to consider the international situation, and the claims and qualifications of the various nations which are to play a part in the drama which is about to open. This will be the subject of our first six chapters. With the seventh chapter we come into touch with the development of the religious movement in Egypt which crippled her fatally for the struggle which lay ahead, and with the remarkable personality which shaped the destiny of the land in the hour of crisis, while subsequent chapters deal with the implications, artistic and religious, of the new creed which Akhenaten taught and practised. The remaining chapters of the book are concerned with the results upon the world situation of the paralysis resulting from Egypt's internal troubles and dissensions, with the heritage which the period left to its successor, and with the attempts of the following generations to deal with the situation. By the time that these have wrought their effort out, we are getting into touch with a totally new world, in which such of the old powers as survive are regrouped in entirely new combinations, and with rank and prestige widely differing from their previous status, and from which some of the most conspicuous of the former *dramatis personæ* have disappeared, never to appear again.

CHAPTER I

EGYPT'S RISE TO SUPREMACY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

THE events which led Egypt to the proud position of dominance among the nations which she manifestly occupied at the time when the story of Amarna begins were the direct outcome of the greatest humiliation which ever befell the land—the Hyksos usurpation. In after days the Egyptians looked back with shame and loathing to the time when foreign kings sat upon the throne of the Pharaohs. Reference to it was made as seldom as possible, and when it was made it was in terms of disgust, which showed how deeply the iron had entered into the soul of the nation. Thus Queen Hatshepsut, in her inscription at Speos Artemidos, refers to the senseless desolation which the invaders had wrought: "I have restored that which was ruins. I have raised up that which was unfinished since the Asiatics were in the midst of Avaris of the Northland, and the barbarians were in the midst of them, overthrowing that which was made, while they ruled in ignorance of Ra." It is now becoming evident that this great disaster was just one phase of the widespread readjustment of the nations which followed upon the descent of the Indo-Europeans from the Oxus-land, somewhere round about 2000 B.C. The invaders brought with them the horse and the war-chariot, and the less highly equipped Semites of Babylonia and Naharina

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

were unable to stand before them. By 1746 B.C. the Kassite Dynasty of Aryan rulers was established in Babylon, and at the same time the Aryan rule was set up in the land within the great bend of the Euphrates, which the Egyptians named Naharina. Here the kingdom of Mitanni, with which the connections of Egypt in later days were to be so intimate, came into being—a kingdom of horse-using Aryan barons ruling over a subject Semitic people.

This great incursion, of course, produced its repercussion in the shape of a great southward movement of the displaced Semites, who carried with them in their movement the new weapons and methods of warfare whose power they had experienced, and also an element of the Aryan invading race whose characteristic names appear common in Palestine about 1400 B.C. The flood of mingled Syrians, Arabs, and Aryans broke through the frontier defences of the Isthmus of Suez, and, possibly because of the novelty of their equipment, subdued the country with surprising ease. Manetho's tradition tells us how "there came, after a surprising manner, men of ignoble birth out of the eastern parts, and had boldness enough to make an expedition into our country, and with ease subdued it by force, yet without our hazarding a battle with them." The main seats of the usurping Semites were, as Manetho tells us, and as was natural, in the Delta, where their chief stronghold was the great fortified camp of Avaris; but they claimed suzerainty over the upper valley also, though a Theban line of princes seemingly maintained a tributary rule there.

The rule of the usurpers must have been characterised—at least at the beginning—by considerable severity and

The Amarna Age

barbarity, which left a feeling of unquenchable hatred in the native Egyptian mind with regard to them ; but the phase of simple brute dominance passed away, as the wonderful civilisation of Egypt asserted its power over the minds of the conquerors ; and the evidence of temple dedications and scientific papyri which they have left shows that the later Hyksos kings were more or less thoroughly Egyptianised—not that this fact created any difference in the feelings which the native Egyptians cherished with regard to them. But about 1600 B.C., or a little earlier, relations between the Hyksos overlord at Avaris and the Theban tributary prince Seqenen-Ra III. at Thebes were evidently becoming strained to a degree which we can best explain by the usurper's consciousness that his vassal was becoming dangerously strong ; and the Hyksos king Apepy III. began to cast about for a *casus belli* which would justify him in reducing his too powerful subject to his proper state of dependence and insignificance.

If we could believe the old folk-tale which has been preserved in the First Sallier Papyrus, Apepy was not too scrupulous in the means which he took to force on war with his reluctant vassal ; for the story runs that King Apepy sent to the Theban prince a demand that he should silence the splashing of the hippopotami in the pool at Thebes, because the noise which they made was interrupting the slumbers of the Hyksos king at Avaris—a mere matter of five or six hundred miles away. Should the Theban prince not be able to silence these remarkable animals, the message went on, he must accept the god Sutekh, whom Apepy served, in place of his own god ; but in the event of his succeeding in the attempt, then

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

Apepy would become a worshipper of Amen-Ra. Such, so far as we can make out from the mutilated fragments of the old story, was the popular tradition as to the manner in which the Egyptians were finally driven into their great War of Independence ; and on the face of it we need not wonder that "the great chiefs, also the captains, and the war-wise generals" of Seqenen-Ra, when they heard the amazing request of their suzerain, "were silent with one accord for a long while, nor did they know what to reply to him, whether good or evil."

This preposterous tale, of course, is merely, as Breasted puts it, "folk-history, a wave mark among the people, left by the tide which the Hyksos war set in motion." At the same time, even when we discard the extravagant detail, there probably remains this genuine residuum of fact—that the provocation to the War of Independence came, not from the native ruler, but from the usurper, who began to feel his position doubtful, and that the Egyptians only entered upon the struggle with reluctance, and because there was no other way left to them. The reluctance of Seqenen-Ra was apparently justified, so far as he was personally concerned, by the event ; for his mummy, which was one of those discovered in 1881 in the *cache* of Der el-Bahri, bears the evidence, in three ghastly wounds on head and face, that he fell in one of the battles which followed upon the outbreak of war. It has been inferred that his death in battle implies the defeat of the Egyptians ; but this by no means follows. As the dead Douglas won the field of Otterburn, so the dead Seqenen-Ra may have won the unknown fight in which he met his death ; and indeed the fact that his

The Amarna Age

followers were able to carry off the dead body of their chief, and to secure for it the due funerary rites, rather suggests that the victory fell to them, and not to the foe, who would have dealt with the dead prince's body as conquerors dealt with the fallen in those stern times.

Be that as it may, the struggle did not end with the death of Sequenen-Ra. It was continued by his three sons, Kames, Senekhtenra, and Aahmes, who succeeded one another on the Theban throne, the reigns of the first two being as brief as might be expected in a time of unceasing warfare. It is probable that Kames captured Memphis from the Hyksos, as its capture is not mentioned in any of the records of the reign of Aahmes, and so important a city must obviously have been secured before the war was carried into the Delta. This was done by Aahmes, who succeeded in wresting from the usurpers their great stronghold Avaris, and in driving them entirely out of the land.

Our only contemporary record of the triumphant close of the war is the biography of one of the naval officers in the service of the Theban king, Aahmes, son of Ebana of el-Kab. The biography is inscribed on the wall of the old sailor's tomb at el-Kab, and tells of his service both in the Hyksos war and in the invasion of Syria which followed; while incidentally Aahmes describes his fighting in no fewer than three rebellions in Egypt and a campaign in Nubia, all within the reign of Aahmes the king. "After I set up a household," says the admiral, "I was transferred to the northern fleet, because of my valour. I followed the king on foot when he rode abroad in his chariot. One [*i.e.*, the

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

king] besieged the city of Avaris ; I showed valour on foot before His Majesty ; then I was appointed to the ship *Shining in Memphis*. One fought on the water in the canal Pazedkhu of Avaris. Then I fought hand to hand ; I brought away a hand. It was reported to the royal herald. The king gave to me 'the gold of valour' [the Egyptian equivalent for the D.S.O.]. Then there was again fighting in this place ; I again fought hand to hand there ; I brought away a hand. One gave to me the gold of valour a second time."

At this point, apparently, the siege of the Hyksos stronghold was interrupted, and the king's troops had to put down a rebellion which menaced their communications with Upper Egypt. Aahmes the sailor plays his part in this struggle manfully, and has no bashfulness in telling us so : "One fought in this Egypt, south of this city ; then I brought away a living captive, a man ; I descended into the water ; behold he was brought as a seizure upon the road of this city, and I crossed with him over the water. It was announced to the royal herald. Then the king presented me with gold in double measure. One captured Avaris ; I took captive there one man and three women, total four heads ; His Majesty gave them to me for slaves."

In the flush of triumph the Pharaoh was not content with merely clearing the land of its oppressors ; he pursued them through the desert into Palestine, and after a siege of three years (or six) captured the town of Sharuhén in South Palestine, where the beaten Hyksos had found refuge. "One besieged Sharuhén," says Admiral Aahmes, "for six years, and His Majesty took it. Then I took captive there two women and one hand.

The Amarna Age

The king gave me the gold of valour, giving me the captives for slaves." After this new exploit, the fighting of the old sailor was seemingly confined to Egypt and Nubia, where, as he tells us, he "fought incredibly," and was rewarded with the title "Warrior of the King"; until in his old age we find him still to the front in the army of Thothmes I., as may be related in its place.

Meanwhile his meagre narrative of the Syrian wars is supplemented by that of a younger Aahmes—Aahmes Pen-nekheb, also a noble of el-Kab, where in these days they evidently bred a fighting stock. Pen-nekheb tells us of the advance northwards of the conquering Egyptians after the fall of Sharuhén: "I followed King Neb-pehti-Ra (Aahmes) triumphant. I captured for him in Zahi (Phœnicia) a hand." Thus the tide of patriotic enthusiasm which had swept the Hyksos out of Egypt had within a few years so reversed the rôles that the Egyptian standards were being carried into regions where no previous Egyptian Pharaoh had ever dreamed of conquest; and the time of flood had not yet been reached.

Egypt had generations of humiliation and wrong, endured at the hands of Semites, to avenge upon Semites; and it is perhaps not without a meaning that old Admiral Aahmes, in the description of his last campaign under Thothmes I., speaks of the king journeying to Syria, "to wash his heart among the foreign countries." She had an army hardened by years of constant warfare and accustomed to victory; she had become conscious, as never before, of her immense latent strength; and she had something of the *élan* which comes from well-grounded self-confidence. The result

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

was that for the first and last time in her history she became a really warlike power, not only ambitious of world-empire—she was always that, more or less—but prepared to vindicate her claim by force of arms as she never was in later times. Under the later Pharaohs, such as Necho and Ha-ab-ra, Egypt had all the will to empire, but lacked the force to make good the will. Under the early Pharaohs of the XVIIIth Dynasty both will and power were present, with the result that within two centuries from the expulsion of the Hyksos, Amenhotep III., last of the great emperors of the conquering stock, could describe himself as “a mighty king, whose southern boundary is as far as Karoy and his northern as Naharina.” The flood-tide of empire, and the impulse of the imperial spirit, were to endure but for a short time; from the death of Thothmes III., the incarnation of the conquering spirit, to the accession of Amenhotep IV., when the ebb began to set in with startling rapidity, is only a matter of seventy-two years; but roughly it may be said that for two hundred years, from 1600 to 1400 B.C., Egypt was the great military power of the ancient world.

The factors within the Egyptian kingdom and nature which account for this somewhat surprising aberration on the part of a naturally peaceable race we have just seen; but it must be admitted that they were coupled with an international situation peculiarly favourable to the development of their fullest influence, and it will be necessary now to consider the circumstances and relations of the other great nations which might have disputed with Egypt the sovereignty of the ancient world, in order to see how it was that a nation naturally so unwarlike

The Amarna Age

attained her aim of world-empire so easily, even when allowance is made for the impetus given by the successful War of Independence.

The point of time with which we have to deal is roughly 1600 B.C., when the process of the expulsion of the Hyksos must have been drawing to its conclusion, as Aahmes acceded to the throne of a liberated Egypt in 1580 B.C., or thereabout. What, then, was the grouping of the nations which might be called the great powers of the ancient east at that date, and what the condition and prospects of each of them? Apart from Egypt itself, there were four powers which might fairly claim to have a say in the matter of dominance—Babylonia, the Hittite Confederation, the Minoan kingdom of Crete, and the Aryan kingdom of Mitanni, whose rulers were akin in race to the Kassite rulers of Babylonia. Less manifestly on a level with these four, yet destined in time to come to have more to say in the question than any of them, was the rising power of Assyria, over which both Mitanni and Babylonia claimed certain undefined rights of suzerainty, the former apparently by previous conquest, the latter by virtue of traditional relationship. It is only fair to Assyria to say that, while Mitanni and Babylon might make the claim, Assyria did not in the least admit it, but regarded herself, and was in effect, save in a few moments of misfortune, an independent sovereign state. While we have thus six great nations, counting Egypt, more or less in a position to influence the destiny of the ancient world, it may be worth while to remember that among the six there are only four cultures—Babylonian, Egyptian, Minoan, and Hittite—if, indeed, the last can be considered as altogether an independent culture.

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

Now of these five nations, any one of which might conceivably have been able to put an effective barrier in the way of Egyptian conquest, as three of them did very effectively at different times in later history, there was not one which, at the time in question, was in a position to interfere, with any hope of success, between Egypt and the object of her ambition. The Minoan of Crete may be ruled out at the start—not because of any weakness on his part, for the catastrophe of Knossos was still two centuries away, and the island empire was probably at the very height of its vivid and vigorous civilisation, but because the orbits of Egypt and Crete, while they interlocked, had very different foci and planes. Intercourse between Knossos and Egypt was frequent, as it had been for centuries ; but Crete's ambitions, in the main, looked as steadily to the north and west as Egypt's did to the north-east and south. Later, there might come to be, and there was, a clash of interests between the two, or rather between one and some of the fragments of the other ; meanwhile there was not, and could not be, rivalry between them.

Of the remaining four, the most imposing in appearance, and probably the least potent in reality, was Babylon. She had a story and a culture as ancient as those of Egypt herself. There may not be, and probably there is not, anything in the suggestion that the Manium or Mannu-dannu of Magan, whom Naram-Sin, son of Sargon of Akkad, conquered and captured, was indeed no less a man than Mena, the founder of the Egyptian monarchy—apart from other inherent improbabilities the dates seem absolutely to forbid us to put so great a humiliation on so revered a name ; but at the least Babylonian culture

The Amarna Age

could match Egyptian with century for century, and her imperial tradition was, to put it at the lowest, not inferior to that of her ancient rival. The names of Mena, Khufu, Senusert and Amenemhat may be great ; but it is doing them no injustice to say that those of Sargon, Naram-Sin, and Hammurabi are at least worthy to stand beside them, judge them by whatever canon of greatness you will. But the days when Babylonia bred such men were long gone by, and centuries were to elapse before she produced any names worthy to stand beside these. The Kassite conquerors who climbed to the throne of Hammurabi about 1750 B.C. must surely have been in the beginning men of energy and warlike ability, for, however much the First Babylonian Dynasty had degenerated, Gandash could scarcely have imposed an alien yoke upon a people so highly organised had he not been a man of great force and been backed by an energetic clan. But Babylonia, with its torrid alluvium and its luxurious civilisation, apparently swiftly sapped the vitality of the Aryan conquerors, and it would be difficult to recall an instance of a dynasty which occupied one of the great thrones of the world for six centuries, and left so little impression upon history. Aliens as they were, in the midst of a numerous and highly cultured people, they must at least have had the gift of conciliating their Semitic subjects ; but the record of their dynasty is scarcely more than Sièyes' "J'ai vécu." "The Kassites in Babylonia," says Dr. Campbell Thompson, "were merely cuckoos in the nest, without great inventive capacity, and markedly inferior to the Egyptians and the Hittites." Under their rule the first of empires sank into a sluggish and stagnant condition of merely material well-being quickened by no

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

stings of ambition, and barely ruffled now and again by some offence to her ancient pride. Practically she did not count as a possible rival to the new Egyptian ambition of empire. Dr. Hall's summary of her influence on the international situation is a bitter but adequate description of the facts: "Babylon pursued her steady way, dull and uninspired as it was. She worshipped the gods, observed the stars, engraved cylinder-seals, wrote millions of cuneiform tablets, and made money. Too far from Egypt to tempt conquering Pharaohs, also impressive with her old history and her imposing façade of wide-spreading power, Babylon seems to have kept western invaders at a distance." She was to learn before she was done with the matter that the most imposing façade of power does not continue to impose beyond a certain time if there is no reality behind it, and to find her danger from the foes of her own household. Meanwhile the easiest way for the Kassites, comfortable and inglorious on their ancient throne, was to smile with benevolent neutrality on the imperial aspirations of Babylon's ancient rival for the crown of culture.

After Babylonia, probably the most imposing figure which met the gaze of the Egyptian Pharaohs, as they looked north-eastwards to their promised land, was that of the other great Aryan kingdom of Mitanni, which was in all likelihood the outcome of the same great national movement which placed the Kassites in power at Babylon. The dominant race in Mitanni was a race of Aryan barons, ruling over a subject Semitic people, as the Normans ruled in Sicily. At the time when Egyptian ambition was planning its Syrian conquests, Mitanni was rising to a position of strength and importance which

The Amarna Age

she was destined to hold only for a short time. By the end of the fifteenth century the Mitannian king Shaushshatar was strong enough to invade Assyria, and to carry off from its capital, Ashur, a great gate of gold and silver, which he erected as a trophy of his victory in his own capital, Washshukkani. But the power of Mitanni was not destined to endure. The kingdom did not answer to any real fact of situation, any more than it was a homogeneous entity. It was an artificial creation, with no natural boundaries, but set down in the great bend of the Euphrates, on the open plain, in a position which seemed to invite attack. So soon as the energy which had impelled its original founders to conquest had worn itself out, as it did comparatively soon, such a kingdom, ruled by an alien race, was bound to become the prey of one or other of the more favourably situated or more homogeneous nations which surrounded it. In fact, the Aryan invasion of Western Asia was, as it has been called, "but a transitory phenomenon," and Mitanni was not the power to resist Egyptian ambition, any more than she proved capable of standing against the attacks of nearer enemies at a later time.

Further to the north and west there was gathering a cloud which, at a later stage, was to break in storm after storm over Syria and the Egyptian dominion there. The long-enduring feud between Egyptian and Hittite was in the end to prove one of the most fatal factors, not only in the decision of Egyptian claims to empire in Syria, but in the settling of the destiny of the whole Near-Eastern world; for it was the century of strife between the two great powers which enabled Assyria to build up in comparative quiet her own strength for the

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

bid which she was soon to make for the mastery of the East. But the fatal struggle between Hittite and Egyptian was still a thing of the future. No doubt the Hittites had all the will to envy Egypt her conquests, and one can imagine the bitterness with which the ambitious kings who built up the Hittite Confederation watched the conquests which robbed them, at least for the time, of a sphere which they had marked out for exploitation by their own vigorous race ; but Hittite consolidation was as yet only begun, and it is only about 1500 B.C. that we hear of the first king of the Hittites. If one may judge from the policy of the later king, Shubbiluliuma, who definitely began the business of thwarting Egyptian ambitions, the Hittites, more than most of these ancient peoples, understood the virtue of patience and its value in handling the prickly questions of international relationships. Probably Hattushilish I. and Murshilish I. recognised, just as fully as did Shubbiluliuma, the futility of trying to pick the pear before it was ripe ; and so we are not surprised to find Thothmes III. recording on his lists of "tribute" during his eighth campaign—"the tribute of Kheta the Great, in this year : 8 silver rings, making 401 deben ; of white precious stone, a great block ; of *zagu* wood . . ." Murshilish I., who is probably the Hittite king who sent the trifling gift which Thothmes records, claims that about this time he captured Aleppo ! But as this would have brought him right across the track of the conquering army of Thothmes, and as Thothmes certainly held the land and Murshilish did not, we may dismiss the claim as unfounded—along with the still more remarkable one which he makes of having

The Amarna Age

captured Babylon! The Hittite king was evidently a man of imagination, whatever his performance may have been. Seventy years later the Hittites might have been a good match even for Thothmes; but the time for that was not yet come, and till Khetaland gathered its full strength it was best to agree with the adversary in the way.

There remained one power whose opposition was in the future to be the most deadly of all; but at this stage, Assyria was not in a position to claim any say in the delimitation of the spheres of influence of the great powers. Her time was still a long way ahead, and in the meantime even Mitanni could claim greater influence than she. We have seen that the Mitannian king carried away the golden gates of Ashur to adorn his own capital; and half a century later Tushratta of Mitanni is still able to command the image of the goddess Ishtar of Nineveh to be sent down to Egypt to heal the Pharaoh Amenhotep III. No doubt the Assyrian kings resented the dominance of Mitanni; and it was probably with a view to secure in Egypt an ally who would help him against his suzerain that the Assyrian king, possibly Ashur-rabi, sent a magnificent present to the victorious Thothmes on his second campaign, following it up in the same year with a second gift. The splendour of the Assyrian gift is in strong contrast with the meagreness of the Hittite offering; perhaps we may take the difference as the measure of the Assyrian king's necessity. Apparently the end of the embassy was served, for Thothmes crossed the Euphrates and invaded Mitanni four years later; all the magic of Egypt's wise men was not able to tell her great king that the lapis lazuli, horses,

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

chariots, and costly woods of Assyria were gifts of the Greeks.

It was, therefore, an exceptionally favourable position in which Egypt found herself as she prepared to take revenge for the long years of humiliation from which she had emerged. Of all the great powers of the Near East, there was not one who at the moment was able to interpose an effective obstacle between her and the object of her ambition. To an energetic and aggressive power there was a great opportunity for expansion; and on the whole, the Pharaohs of the XVIIIth Dynasty proved themselves the fitting men to use the opportunity. The reign of Amenhotep I., who succeeded Aahmes the Liberator, was perhaps not marked by any Asiatic campaign. Either Egypt had scarcely realised that Aahmes had in effect committed her to an imperial destiny in the northern lands, or the Syrians whom he had chastised were submissive under the shock of so unexpected an attack. Amenhotep, in any case, confined his activities to a campaign in Nubia, where he fought a battle at the Second Cataract, in which he captured the chief of the Nubians, and made prisoners of a considerable part of his force. Admiral Aahmes, as we have seen, tells us with his usual shrinking modesty that in this engagement he "fought incredibly," while his understudy from el-Kab, Aahmes Pen-nekheb, also distinguished himself. After this battle, Amenhotep appears to have incorporated the conquered part of Nubia, as far as the Second Cataract, in his kingdom, placing it for administrative purposes under the governor of Nekhen (Hierakonpolis); and Harmini, the king's governor of the new conquest, records on his stele that

The Amarna Age

he "went north with the tribute of Wawat each year . . . there was not found a balance against me."

From his Nubian conquests, Amenhotep was suddenly summoned northwards by an invasion of the restless Libyan tribes on the western frontier. The danger was evidently urgent for the moment, for Admiral Aahmes tells us that he "brought back His Majesty in two days to Egypt from the upper pool," and was rewarded with another gift of gold. If this means that the journey from the Second Cataract to Shellal was done in two days—a distance of about 220 miles—it means good going, and Aahmes earned his distinction. In the repulsing of the raid and the subsequent invasion of Libya, both of the warriors of el-Kab again distinguished themselves, and the admiral, as we have already seen, was given the title, "Warrior of the King," while Pen-nekheb carried off three hands in the battle.

With the successor of Amenhotep, however, we enter upon the definitely Asiatic development of Egyptian policy. Thothmes I. may have been the son of Amenhotep; if so, his mother, Sen-senb, was only a secondary wife, and the new king had to legitimise his position by marrying his half-sister, the princess Aahmes, whose pure descent on both sides carried with it the right to the throne. Thothmes early showed the vigour which was to characterise his whole reign until the somewhat mysterious eclipse which obscures its close. One of his first actions was to appoint an official specially to deal with the affairs of the new province of Nubia, and at this point the "King's Son of Kush" makes his first appearance in history. The title does not imply that the viceroy of Nubia was actually a prince of the blood royal,

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

though in practice he often was; and the first holder of the office, Thure, had apparently no connection with the royal house at all. Thothmes himself speedily went south to secure the province, and extend its limits; and at Tombos, a little above the Third Cataract, he has left us an inscription, which is not only of interest because it tells of the definite establishment of his southern frontier at this point, where he established a frontier fortified post, but also because it gives us a description of the Asiatic empire which in the future was to engross his attention and energy.

The reference to the Asiatic frontier in the Tombos inscription is a very curious one, and shows us either that the conquests of Aahmes in Asia had been much more extensive than otherwise appears, or else that with Thothmes the wish was father to the thought. To make clear the meaning of the terms used we must remember that to the dweller in the Nile Valley to go north was to go downstream, and to go south to go upstream. It must therefore have seemed very strange to the first Egyptian invaders of Asia to see another great river, the Euphrates, on which their familiar conditions were exactly reversed, and where, in going south, you went downstream. With this in mind, the meaning of the description which Thothmes gives of his frontiers becomes plain. "His southern boundary is as far as the frontier of this land (where the inscription stood), his northern as far as *that inverted water which goes downstream in going upstream.*" It is quite clear that the man who was responsible for this quaint description had actually seen the Euphrates, and recognised the difference between the direction of its current and that of his

The Amarna Age

own Nile ; whether it was at the head of troops, or merely in the course of peaceful trade that the strange phenomenon had been noted, is another matter. In any case, Thothmes was soon to justify the statement of his inscription.

The Nubian expedition resulted, of course, in a complete triumph for the new king, who, as Admiral Aahmes tells us, slew the Nubian chief with his own hand. The fighting was apparently both on land and on the river, for the old sailor (he was now at least sixty-five) tells us that he "showed bravery in His Majesty's presence in the bad water, in the passage of the ship by the bend." It was now that he got the title of Admiral, by which we have distinguished him from his fellow-townsmen. "One appointed me chief of the sailors." Here also we see the introduction of a piece of savagery which for awhile becomes characteristic of Egyptian warfare. In general, though mutilation of the dead bodies of the vanquished was carried on by the Egyptians in order that the number of slain might be computed by the reckoning up of the severed members, the Egyptian did not display needless cruelty in warfare. But a race which is becoming habituated to war is apt very quickly to become habituated also to cruelties and indecencies of exultation which in normal circumstances may be quite alien to its nature. So now we get the victorious king carrying out a piece of barbarous exultation over his dead enemy, which we shall find repeated on a larger scale at a later stage in the history. "His Majesty sailed down-river, with all countries in his grasp, that wretched Nubian troglodyte being hanged head downward at the prow of His Majesty, and landed at Karnak."

And now the time had come for the Egyptian troops

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

to resume the career of conquest in Asia, of which the raid of Aahmes had given them the first taste. The spirit in which Thothmes set out upon his Asiatic expedition was still the same as that in which his grandfather had swept Syria with fire and sword; he was avenging the wrongs which Egypt had endured so long at the hands of the Hyksos. "After these things," says Admiral Aahmes, who now makes his last appearance on the stage, "His Majesty journeyed to Retenu, to wash his heart among the foreign countries." Of the organisation of the Syrian peoples at the times when Egypt thus made her appearance among them, not merely as a raider, but with a view to permanent conquest, we have comparatively little knowledge. Syria and Palestine, by reason of their natural configuration, have always been lands where a strong centralised dominion was not to be looked for. Their culture at this time, it seems, if one may judge from the record which Thothmes III. gives of the spoil which he brought back from his Syrian campaigns, though perhaps inferior, was not markedly inferior to that of Egypt itself; but there does not seem to have been any single state of sufficient power to weld into one the scattered tribes and clans which, united, might have opposed a formidable barrier to the Egyptian advance. Thothmes apparently met with no effective opposition during his passage through Syria, and it was not until he had reached Naharina, as the Egyptians called the land where the Euphrates makes its great bend southward and eastward, that he encountered an enemy worthy of his strength. Conceivably the battle which is now recorded may have been with the troops of the King of Mitanni, who would

The Amarna Age

naturally regard with apprehension the approach of so formidable an intruder.

In any case, the opposition, whoever may have furnished it, was effectively dealt with. "His Majesty," says Admiral Aahmes, "arrived at Naharin; His Majesty found that foe when he was planning destruction; His Majesty made a great slaughter among them. Numberless were the living prisoners which His Majesty brought off from his victories." One's point of view has a great deal to do with the perspective in which an action is judged, and the King of Mitanni's legitimate defence of his own country against unprovoked aggression appears to the old Egyptian soldier—"that foe planning destruction." We need not talk, as Breasted does, on the strength of such a phrase, of the "revolt" of the Asiatics against Egyptian dominion, nor infer that there must have been an unrecorded conquest by Amenhotep I., and that Thothmes was merely re-establishing Egyptian authority over rebels. Had such a campaign taken place, surely the two paladins from el-Kab would not have been left out of the fighting, or been too modest to tell us of it, and their share in it. So far as the evidence goes, no Egyptian king save Aahmes had penetrated into North Syria before Thothmes fought his battle in Naharina, and the new expedition was the first Egyptian attempt to make a permanent conquest of the country. In his last battle Admiral Aahmes held an important command, and showed himself worthy of his old fame. "Meanwhile I was at the head of our troops, and His Majesty beheld my bravery. I brought off a chariot, its horses, and him who was upon it as a living prisoner, and took them to

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

His Majesty. One presented me with gold in double measure." The old warrior had still a quarter of a century of life before him ere he was laid in his tomb at el-Kab, but his fighting days were done when the Asiatic campaign closed. He was ninety years old when the last sentence was added to the record of his tomb. "When I grew old, and had attained old age, my honours were as at the beginning . . . a tomb, which I myself had made." His biography, scanty as it is, gives us a real glimpse into the beginnings of Egyptian expansion; and one figures the old champion, who had served under three Pharaohs, and could remember the fourth whom his father served, and the first struggles against the Hyksos, spending his declining days at el-Kab, the pride of his native town, and the mirror of true soldiership to all the young aspirants of the army and navy. He would at least teach them to regard the soldier's trade with a very different eye from that with which it was viewed in later days, when the glamour of conquest had faded.

The furthest point reached by Thothmes on his Asiatic campaign is nowhere indicated for us in any of the records of his reign, but we can infer that it must have been close to the Euphrates, but probably on the western side of the river, from the record of Thothmes III. on his eighth campaign, which runs as follows: "His Majesty set up a tablet east of this water (the Euphrates); he set up another beside the tablet of his father, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Aakheperkara (Thothmes I.). . . . His Majesty arrived at the city of Niy, going southward, when His Majesty returned, having set up his tablet in Naharin, extending the boundaries of

The Amarna Age

Egypt." From this it seems plain that the tablet of Thothmes I. must have been set up somewhere north of Niy, and as his son carefully distinguishes the tablet which he set up on the east side of the river from the one which he set up beside that of his father, the tablet of Thothmes I. must have been on the western bank of the Euphrates. At all events, he had now fairly made good his boast of the Tombos stele, and his northern boundary was "as far as that inverted water which goes downstream in going upstream." From this time onwards to the end of his reign it does not appear that he was called upon again to vindicate Egyptian authority in the conquered lands. The terror of the first experience of Egyptian arms, apart from the raid of Aahmes, was apparently sufficient to keep the Syrian dynasts loyal for a matter of twenty years or so. The peaceful evening of his days he employed, according to his stele at Abydos, in works of piety, and in consolidating the empire which he had gained, and securing his ancestral kingdom from attack. "I have made monuments for the gods; I have beautified their sanctuaries for the future; I have maintained their temples, I have restored that which was ruinous, I have surpassed that which was done before. . . . I have increased the work of others, the kings who have been before me; the gods had joy in my time, their temples were in festivity. I made the boundaries of Egypt as far as that which the sun encircles. I made strong those who were in fear; I repelled the evil from them. I made Egypt the superior of every land." Conspicuous among the great works which he did for the glory of the gods was the great cedar-pillared hall which he erected at Karnak, with its pylon and its twin obelisks,

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

of the erection of all which his architect Ineni has left us his own record at Abd el-Qurna. The same official, who claims the unique distinction that he handled labour under five kings without swearing (!), tells us also the interesting fact that he made for Thothmes I. the first of the long series of cliff-tombs in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes. "I inspected the excavation of the cliff-tomb of His Majesty, alone, no one seeing, no one hearing."

If the picture which has been drawn by some modern historians of Egypt be a true one, the later days of Thothmes I. were by no means so glorious and peaceful as he makes out in his Abydos inscription; but the reconstruction of what has been called "the Feud of the Thutmosids" is so fantastic as to carry no conviction, save to minds which are convinced that a plain story is *ipso facto* suspect. In any case there is no need for us to waste time and patience over the question of whether Thothmes I., Thothmes II., Thothmes III., and Hatshepsut did or did not perform the amazing series of evolutions, on and off the throne, which Sethe and Breasted have attributed to them, though the picture of a Pharaonic general post, with a crowd of panting courtiers vainly trying to keep pace with the kaleidoscopic changes of occupation of the throne, has its humorous side. The main facts which affect our subject are quite plain—namely, that whether Thothmes II. preceded or succeeded Thothmes III. and Hatshepsut, or alternated with either or both of them, his Syrian campaign at all events came before those of Thothmes III.; and that whatever was the relationship of Queen Hatshepsut to the two latter Thothmes, the long peace of her reign was also prior to the warlike energy of Thothmes III., and

The Amarna Age

indeed was one of the causes which made that activity necessary. The respectable Ineni had no doubt, unless his own inscription belies him, that Thothmes II. succeeded his father in the normal way. "The king (Thothmes I.) rested from life, going forth to heaven, having completed his years in gladness of heart. The Hawk in the nest appeared as the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Aakheperenra (Thothmes II.)."

The accession of Thothmes II. was greeted by an outburst of rebellion at both extremities of the empire. Such a rebellion is almost a normal phenomenon accompanying any change of ruler in the East, and does not argue any weakness on the part of the new king. The physical frailty of Thothmes II., as revealed by his mummy, does not suggest a great warrior, and makes the picture of him raging "like a panther" a little ridiculous; yet he dealt promptly enough with the situation. Whether he himself led the army which was sent south to restore Egyptian authority in Nubia, or merely dispatched his troops under one of his generals, is not quite clear from his inscription at Aswan; but as it is nowhere directly stated that the king was present in person with his forces, the probability is that the work in Kush was left to subordinates. But there can be no doubt that he commanded in person in the expedition into Syria which followed, and perhaps this fact may account for his absence from the Nubian expedition. Aahmes Pennekheb of el-Kab closes the record of his long service in the field, during which he had followed four kings, Aahmes, Amenhotep I., Thothmes I., and Thothmes II., by stating, "I followed King Aakheperenra (Thothmes II.) triumphant; there were brought off for me in Shasu very

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

many living prisoners; I did not count them." In itself this statement implies no more than a raid upon the Bedawy tribes of the desert; but when taken in conjunction with the fragmentary inscription from Der el-Bahri, it appears as part of a campaign in which the new king again carried the Egyptian standards to the Euphrates, and reasserted the Egyptian claims to authority over the whole of North Syria. "Gifts," says the broken slab from Der el-Bahri, "which were brought to the fame of the king Aakheperenra from his victories . . . elephants . . . horses . . . Retenu the Upper . . . the land of Niy . . . kings . . . His Majesty in . . . when he came out of . . ." Shadowy as the picture is, it tells us that for a third time (or perhaps a fourth, if we include the problematical exhibition under Amenhotep I.), in less than eighty years, the lands of North Syria and Naharina had seen the Egyptian standards and learned to dread the prowess of the Egyptian archers. The lesson was burned in upon their minds deeply enough to keep them quiet and obedient during the long peace which marked the reign of Queen Hatshepsut.

As became her sex, this great queen led no armies, and so far as the records go, sent out none to increase Egypt's empire. She was content to hold what her soldier ancestors had gained, and the triumphs of her reign, which make it one of the most remarkable and attractive in Egyptian history, are purely peaceful. Her memory is linked with such achievements as the setting up of the two great obelisks at Karnak, of which the survivor, $97\frac{1}{2}$ feet in height, is the tallest obelisk in Egypt, and is only exceeded by the Lateran obelisk of her successor, the building of the beautiful temple of



LANDS AND NATIONS OF THE NEAR EAST.

MAP ACCOMPANYING "THE AMARNA AGE," BY THE REV.
JAMES BAIKIE (A. & C. BLACK, LTD. LONDON).

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

the story of his life, honest though his satisfaction at his honours may be. "I followed the kings of Upper and Lower Egypt, the gods; I was with their Majesties when they went to the South and North countries, in every place where they went; from King Aahmes I., deceased, King Amenhotep I., deceased, King Thothmes I., deceased, King Thothmes II., deceased, until this Good God, King Thothmes III., who is given life forever. I have attained a good old age, having had a life of royal favour, having had honour under their Majesties, and the love of me having been in the court." Of Queen Hatshepsut he makes no mention in his list, though he tells us elsewhere, as we have seen, of his relation to her—Hatshepsut was only a woman after all; and, besides, she was not popular, to say the least of it, with the Good God, King Thothmes III., to whose warlike exploits we must now turn.

Thothmes III., who on the death of Hatshepsut succeeded to the sole rule, whatever may have been his position before, must rank as the great empire-builder of Egypt. It may very well be that the actual extent of territory covered by his successive campaigns was not much greater than that which Thothmes I. swept in his single advance to the Euphrates; but there was this difference between the achievements of the two conquerors: that the first Thothmes was content with the one expedition, while his greater successor toiled unceasingly at the task of bringing Syria and Naharina thoroughly under Egyptian domination, until, at the close of his seventeen campaigns, "there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or chirped" against him in all Syria. It was he too who began the

The Amarna Age

custom followed by his successors of bringing down into Egypt for education the sons of the petty princes of Palestine and Syria, sending them back Egyptianised when the time came for them to sit upon the thrones of their fathers. The solidity of his achievement is witnessed to by the way in which the Egyptian Empire, though it had so little time allowed it for consolidation, held together against the double strain of assaults from without and indifference within, in the days of Akhenaten. It collapsed in the end, no doubt—no fabric of human rearing would have done anything else under the maddening conditions imposed upon it by the fanaticism of Akhenaten; but the fact that it stood the strain so long testifies that its foundations were well and truly laid by the great conqueror and his two successors.

The accession of the new king in Egypt was immediately hailed by the normal eastern revolt in the provinces. The Oriental mind has always viewed such occasions as favourable opportunities for "trying it on" upon the untested king, to see how far it may be safe to go with him. It was very far from safe to make such experiments with Thothmes, as the rebels were to learn by bitter experience. The first news which the king received as independent ruler was that "from Yeraza to the marshes of the earth"—that is, from Northern Palestine to the Euphrates, "they had begun to revolt against His Majesty." What part Southern Palestine took in the business is not clear from the record, which mentions Sharuhén, though in a mutilated passage from which nothing can be inferred; but the progress of the campaign makes it clear that south of Carmel the Canaanites had too much regard for the might of Egypt and their own safety to join

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

the rebels. Thothmes was as prompt in picking up the gauntlet as the rebels had been in throwing it down; indeed, one can imagine that he could not have wished for anything more to his mind. Starting with his army, which can scarcely have seen any more service than he had himself, he marched from Tharu, on the eastern frontier, to Gaza, a distance of 160 miles, in nine days—a remarkable piece of marching across the desert, and with untried troops. The day of his arrival at Gaza was the anniversary of his coronation; Thothmes showed his respect for times and seasons by marching in on the evening of his feast-day, and marching out the next morning. From Gaza to Carmel his progress was slightly more leisurely, possibly because of the need for reconnoitring, as he drew nearer to the enemy; but he covered the ninety miles in another ten days. Camping at Yehem, a town of unknown situation somewhere on the southern side of the Carmel ridge, he summoned his first council of war.

The problem before the Egyptian commanders was by no means an easy one. The whole land beyond the Carmel ridge was evidently hostile. All the small states of North Syria and Palestine had united in a League, which was headed by the King of Kadesh, the most formidable of the local kinglets. What force the League could bring into the field we do not know; but it was probably not inferior to that of Thothmes, and we know that in equipment it was quite equal to anything to be found in Egypt. The Egyptian scouts had brought word to the king that the rebel army was concentrated upon Megiddo, on the Esdraelon side of the mountain ridge, so that, in order to attack, Thothmes must pass the ridge in face of the enemy. He had the choice of three

The Amarna Age

roads across the hills, of which the easiest and the longest was the main Damascus road, from which a branch road led north-west again by Taanach to Megiddo. Next in order of easiness was the most northerly road, known as the Zefiti road. Most direct, but also most difficult, was the narrow pass which led straight through the hills upon Megiddo. Thothmes put the situation before his assembled officers, telling them of the enemy concentration at Megiddo, and asking their advice as to the best means of getting at his foe. Following the universal practice of councils of war, the Egyptian officers declared for caution.

"They spoke in the presence of His Majesty, 'How is it that we should go upon this road which threatens to be narrow, while they come and say that the enemy is there waiting, holding the way against a multitude? Will not horse come behind horse, and man behind man likewise? Shall our vanguard be fighting while our rear-guard is yet standing yonder in Aruna, not having fought? There are yet two other roads: one road, behold it comes forth at Taanach; the other, behold it will bring us upon the way north of Zefiti, so that we shall come out to the north of Megiddo. Let our victorious lord proceed upon the road he desires; but cause us not to go by a difficult road.'" From the point of view of the ordinary competent pedestrian officer, this was good sound advice; but great victories are not won by caution, but by the imagination which can see far enough to take great risks for a great end. Thothmes was evidently a great natural soldier, born to the trade, and with the sure instinct for the stroke which turns success into overwhelming triumph. He saw clearly two things which his council could not see—that

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

with untried forces on either side, success would fall to the side which managed to get in an unexpected blow, and that prestige counted for a great deal with an Oriental army ; and he determined to risk the passage of the defile, and the chance of being attacked as he emerged, before his troops could deploy, for the sake of the advantage of surprise, and the impression which a direct advance would make upon the enemy. "I swear," he said, "as Ra loves me, as my father Amen favours me, as my nostrils are filled with satisfying life, My Majesty will proceed upon this road of Aruna. Let him who will among you go upon those roads ye have mentioned, and let him who will among you come in the following of My Majesty. Shall they think, among those enemies whom Ra detests, 'Does His Majesty proceed upon another road? He begins to be fearful of us,' so will they think."

His council, of course, agreed at once to the king's resolution : "Behold we are the following of Thy Majesty in every place whither Thy Majesty proceedeth, as the servant is behind his master." The army was committed to the narrow pass, the same as that through which Allenby in 1918 flung his cavalry to cut off the retreat of the Turkish army ; and the king himself led the advance—"He went forth at the head of his army himself, showing the way by his own footsteps ; horse behind horse, His Majesty being at the head of the army." The very daring of the movement proved its safety. The army of the Syrian League had apparently been drawn up on the supposition that the Egyptians would advance by the easy Taanach road, and in order to cover that approach its front extended southwards from Megiddo towards Taanach. The advance of the Egyptian army direct

The Amarna Age

upon Megiddo was a complete surprise, and the Syrian commanders were unable to concentrate quickly enough to attack the thin line of their enemy as it debouched from the pass. The rebels had thus lost a priceless opportunity, and Thothmes now was not only able to meet his foe on equal terms of position, but had in his favour the consciousness that he had won the first move in the strategical game; while his opponents would be correspondingly discouraged. Deployment took place too late in the day for battle to be possible, and the two armies lay encamped opposite one another, with the prospect of a decisive encounter next morning.

Early in the morning Thothmes was astir, ranking his men in order of battle. "His Majesty went forth in a chariot of electrum, arrayed in his weapons of war, like Horus the Smiter, Lord of Power, like Mentu of Thebes, while his father Amen strengthened his arms. The southern wing of this army of His Majesty was on a hill south of the Brook Kina, the northern wing was at the north-west of Megiddo, while His Majesty was in their centre, with Amen as the protection of his members." The two hosts must have presented a gay picture as they stood ranked over against one another; for the splendour of the equipment of Thothmes and his nobles was matched by the gorgeousness of their enemies. Each kinglet of the Syrian League vied with his neighbour in the richness of his outfit, and chariots inlaid with gold and silver, and suits of bronze mail damascened with gold glittered all along the line. The days of huge and cumbrous armies were not yet, and the likelihood is that neither army much exceeded twenty

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

thousand in number ; so that the eye could take in the whole gallant picture at a glance.

There was a great deal of display for a very little fighting ; for the first decisive battle of which we have any detailed record was also one of the briefest. The spirit had been taken out of the Syrians by the daring advance of Thothmes, and they went into battle half-beaten before a stroke was struck, with the consciousness that they were opposed to superior generalship. Accordingly, when Thothmes led his line in a headlong charge, the Syrian army scarcely waited for contact, but broke and fled at once with such rapidity that only eighty-three men were slain in the actual *mêlée*. The fugitives rushed for the shelter of the fortifications of Megiddo ; but the citizens had no mind to see the triumphant Egyptians forcing a way into the town along with the beaten rabble. They promptly closed the gates, and hauled up their fleeing friends by improvised ropes of twisted clothing.

At a later stage in his career, Thothmes would not have permitted the laxity of discipline which now lost him the immediate fruits of his victory ; but he was new, as were also his officers, to the task of controlling troops in the flush of triumph, and for a little the army got out of hand, carried away by the sight of the rich spoil which was scattered over the battlefield, and in the hostile camp. "Now if only the army of His Majesty had not given their heart to plundering the things of the enemy, they would have captured Megiddo at this moment, when the wretched foe of Kadesh and the wretched foe of this city were hauled up in haste to bring them into this city. The fear of His Majesty had entered their hearts, their arms were powerless, his serpent diadem was victorious among them."

The Amarna Age

The spoil, indeed, was wonderful. "Then were captured their horses, their chariots of gold and silver were made spoil, their champions lay stretched out like fishes on the ground. The victorious army of His Majesty went around counting their portions. . . . They brought up the booty which they had taken, consisting of hands, of living prisoners, of horses, chariots of gold and silver, of . . ."

They met, however, with a very different reception than they had expected from their king. Thothmes was furious at the loss of the chance of finishing the war at a single stroke; and instead of compliments on their valour, they met with bitter reproaches on their want of discipline. "Had ye captured this city afterward, I would have given (praise) to Ra this day; because every chief of every country, that has revolted is within it; and because it is the capture of a thousand cities this capture of Megiddo." It is in such a passage that Thothmes reveals himself as the great captain and natural soldier, as distinguished from the mere courageous trooper, of whom Ramses II. at Kadesh is the perfect example. Thothmes, even on his first campaign, has the instinct of the general, and not that of the mere fighter:

"And through the heat of conflict keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need."

Such a figure is rare in early warfare, and he is consistent with himself all through his seventeen campaigns, and always shows the eye of the great soldier for the wider aspects of the strategic situation.

The best having escaped him, Thothmes had to be content with the second-best. Megiddo was at once

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

invested, though the soul of the Syrian League, the King of Kadesh, managed to escape from the town before the Egyptian lines were drawn quite around it. The place was surrounded with a wall strengthened by the trunks of all the fruit-trees of the neighbourhood. To this wall was given the name, "Menkheperra (Thothmes III.)-is-the-Surrounder-of-the-Asiatics"; and the king and his troops sat down, having reaped the harvest in the fields of Megiddo, and waited till hunger should force a surrender.

Meanwhile, the terror of the name of the Egyptian king had fallen on the country, and day after day the camp saw the arrival of chiefs of the surrounding tribes, who came in "to smell the earth" before His Majesty, and to swear allegiance. The spoil of the battle, so dearly bought, in the judgment of Thothmes, was counted: "340 living prisoners; 83 hands; 2,041 mares; 191 foals; 6 stallions; a chariot wrought with gold, its pole of gold, belonging to that foe (the King of Kadesh); a beautiful chariot, wrought with gold, belonging to the chief of Megiddo; 892 chariots of his wretched army; a beautiful suit of bronze armour, belonging to that foe (of Kadesh); a beautiful suit of bronze armour, belonging to the chief of Megiddo; 200 suits of armour, belonging to his wretched army; 502 bows," together with great numbers of cattle. The list, together with that which follows in the records from the towns in North Syria which now surrendered, shows that Syria, at this time, was the seat of a civilisation which, whatever its taste may have been, was not unworthy, materially, to be compared with that of its conqueror, and was far ahead of that of later days, when the lawlessness and ceaseless intertribal warfare of which the Book of Judges gives us a picture had destroyed all

The Amarna Age

sense of security, and all possibility of culture. When one reads the list—"A silver statue of beaten work . . . the head of gold, the staff with human faces ; six chairs of that foe, of ivory, ebony, carob wood, wrought with gold ; six footstools belonging to them ; six large tables of ivory and carob wood ; a staff of carob wood, wrought with gold and all costly stones in the fashion of a sceptre, belonging to that foe, all of it wrought with gold ; a statue of that foe, of ebony wrought with gold, the head of which was inlaid with lapis lazuli"—one seems to be listening to the catalogue of the splendours of the tomb of Tutankhamen. "The staff with human faces" appears from the description to be of the same type as the wonderfully carved staves which the Egyptian Pharaoh used in his walks abroad ; and several of the other items, such as the ebony statue wrought with gold, and inlaid with lapis lazuli, might take their place beside the funereal equipment of Tutankhamen without shaming their company. What the artistic quality of these works may have been we have no means of judging ; but at least they bear witness to a luxurious and settled state of society, such as Palestine was scarcely to know again till Solomon, for a short time, enriched Jerusalem with the perhaps doubtfully artistic products of Phœnician art.

Ere long the pressure of hunger compelled the surrender of Megiddo. "Those Asiatics who were in the wretched Megiddo came forth to the fame of Menkheperra, saying, 'Give us a chance, that we may present to Thy Majesty our impost!'" The surrender did not mean the close of the campaign, for the King of Kadesh was still unsubdued, and apparently the season did not admit of the arduous task of attacking so strong a

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

fortress. It was necessary, therefore, to bridle the activities of this important enemy by securing the passes of the Lebanon against any attempt on his part to move southwards. Accordingly, Thothmes marched into the Lebanon, captured the three cities of Yenoam, Nuges, and Herenkeru, and set up a fortified post, to which he gave the name, "Menkheperra-is-the-Binder-of-the-Barbarians." This task accomplished, Thothmes marched homewards, and arrived at Thebes in a little less than six months from the time he left Tharu—a remarkable feat for an untried general commanding an untried army.

It is needless to follow the king on each of his campaigns in Syria, the more so as several of these were not in any sense feats of war, but merely military promenades, undertaken in order to show the Egyptian standards afresh in the conquered regions, and to keep the turbulent Syrian dynasts from forgetting the weight of the hand of Thothmes. The third campaign, which was one of these aids to memory, is notable from the evidence which it gave of the fact that Thothmes, though a man of war to his finger-tips, was by no means of the barren and unprofitable type of the average eastern conqueror. His campaign which we have just recorded has reminded more than one historian of the less fortunate one which a greater soldier, Napoleon, waged in the same district; and Thothmes, though he can scarcely claim to stand on the same plane of soldiership as Napoleon, had the great Frenchman's instinct for making war subserve the interests of human knowledge. Just as the Egyptian expedition of 1798 gathered a wealth of information about Egypt, which laid the foundation of all subsequent interest in the land, so

The Amarna Age

Thothmes, as he passed through Syria, gathered specimens of the flora and fauna of the land, and caused likenesses of all the remarkable plants and creatures to be carved in relief on the walls of the chambers which he reared in the great temple of Karnak. Along with them he has engraved the following inscription: "Year 25, under the Majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Menkheperra, living forever. Plants which His Majesty found in the land of Retenu. All plants that grow, all flowers that are in God's Land, which were found by His Majesty when His Majesty proceeded to Upper Retenu, to subdue all the countries according to the command of his father, Amen, who put them under his sandals from the year 1 to myriads of years. His Majesty said: 'I swear, as Ra loves me, as my father, Amen, favours me, all these things happened in truth. I have not written fiction as that which really happened to My Majesty; I have engraved the excellent deeds. . . . My Majesty hath done this from the desire to put them before my father, Amen, in this great temple of Amen, as a memorial for ever and ever.'" Few conquerors of his time, perhaps of most times, would have dreamed of such an action, and it honourably marks him out from the ruck of mere soldiers.

The fifth campaign, in which the king dealt with Phœnicia and its inland district, is remarkable for two things—one, the candour with which the king admits the lapse of his army from discipline before the temptations of the rich Phœnician country; the other, the first tentative adoption by him of the use of sea-power in his wars. He tells us that Phœnicia was indeed a land flowing with milk and honey, or rather with something less innocuous.

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

"Their gardens were filled with their fruit, their wines were found remaining in their presses as water flows, their grain on the terraces . . . it was more plentiful than the sand of the shore. The army were overwhelmed with their portions." Perhaps it was fortunate that Thothmes on this expedition had not to encounter any very serious opposition ; for the result of the abundance was a deterioration of the discipline of the army, as serious as that which Capua wrought on the fibre of Hannibal's veterans. "Behold the army of His Majesty was drunk and anointed with oil every day as at a feast in Egypt." Thothmes makes no comment, and indeed none is necessary, save that the passage casts an unexpected light upon the quality of the normal Egyptian feast. Capturing Arvad, with its fleet, he brought his army back to Egypt by sea.

The sixth campaign was notable for the fact that Thothmes now at last succeeded in reaching and capturing the stronghold of his inveterate enemy, the King of Kadesh. In the accomplishment of this important task he made use of his new weapon of sea-power, landing his army at a port on the Syrian coast, probably Simyra, and making it his base. Marching thence inland, he attacked and captured Kadesh, and then returned to Simyra, and sailed thence to Arvad, which apparently needed another reminder that disloyalty to its new overlord was dangerous. On his return voyage he carried with him a number of the sons and other near relatives of the various princes whom he had subdued. These were lodged on their arrival in a place named "Castle-in-Thebes," and we may imagine them being trained there for their future as rulers under Egyptian

The Amarna Age

suzerainty, somewhat as the sons of Indian princes are trained at the viceregal colleges at Ajmere, Lahore, and Rājkhôṭ. "Behold the children of the chiefs, and their brothers were brought to be in strongholds in Egypt. Now, whosoever died among these chiefs, His Majesty would cause his son to stand in his place." The idea was distinctly an advanced one, like most of the ideas of Thothmes, and if it did not work perfectly any more than our own copy of it has worked, still the loyalty of men like Ribaddi and Abdikhiba under very unfavourable circumstances a century later shows that the plan of the great empire-builder had not altogether failed.

It was in his eighth campaign that Thothmes reached the summit of his ambition, and at last emulated and surpassed the feat of his father by crossing the Euphrates and carrying the Egyptian standards into Mitanni. His previous conquest of Kadesh had given him for the time the command of the Orontes Valley, and after landing his troops at Simyra, he marched by that valley to the great river, fighting, according to the record of his captain Amenemhab, three battles on the way. One of these is merely described as being in Naharin; another takes place at "the Height-of-Wan," on the west of Aleppo; the third, obviously the battle which secured the crossing of the Euphrates, is fought at Carchemish, and in it Amenemhab distinguishes himself by bringing in several living prisoners from the eastern side of the river. The crossing of what had up to this time been the limit of Egyptian conquest gave great satisfaction to the king; and while he does not appear to have advanced very far into Mitanni, he records with pride the fact that he was able to surpass his father's limit.

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

"Behold, His Majesty was in the land of Retenu. . . . He set up a tablet east of this water; he set up another beside the tablet of his father, Aakheperkara (Thothmes I.)." Returning from the eastern side of the Euphrates, he besieged and captured the city of Niy, which seemingly lay near Aleppo, and this apparently closed the active operations of the campaign. In the neighbourhood of Niy he remained for a time, receiving visits from the ambassadors of various powers, among them Babylon and the Hittites, and going in for elephant hunting on a truly kingly scale. His diversions in this sort are made known to us by Amenemhab, who gives us a glimpse of an incident of the hunt, which might have had disastrous results for the growing empire but for the promptitude of the Egyptian officer. "Again," says the soldier, "I beheld another excellent deed which the Lord of the Two Lands did in Niy. He hunted 120 elephants for the sake of their tusks. . . . I engaged the largest which was among them, which fought against His Majesty; I cut off his hand (trunk) while he was alive before His Majesty, while I stood in the water between two rocks. Then my Lord rewarded me with gold." The danger of Thothmes must have been fairly imminent before a swordsman faced a charging elephant on foot to avert it, and the pluck of Amenemhab deserved the highest honours that the king could give.

The crossing of the Euphrates remained the high-water mark of Thothmes' success, and in none of his later campaigns does he appear to have surpassed the limit which he reached at this time. Indeed, his subsequent adventures were more of the nature of repeated military promenades through the conquered regions,

The Amarna Age

undertaken in order to show his new subjects that the arm of Egypt was not shortened, and to consolidate Egyptian authority. His great achievement was recorded at Karnak on a pair of huge obelisks, a fragment of one of which still stands at Constantinople. "Its inscriptions," says Captain Engelbach, "are without interest;" but surely this is a hard saying, when we remember that among them is the sentence, "(Thothmes III.) who crossed the 'Great Bend' of Naharin, with might and with victory at the head of his army, making a great slaughter. . . ." In spite of the absence of serious fighting from some of the campaigns, their military value to the empire was great; for on each occasion the various harbours and fortified posts which the army would need in actual warfare were re-provisioned and re-stocked with munitions of war against future needs, and the last campaign of the old warrior showed how wise had been the foresight which had diligently attended to such matters. Thothmes was probably a man of seventy or more when the news reached him that the King of Kadesh, his inveterate enemy from his first campaign, had revolted, and had succeeded in forming a new League, which drew into its toils Tunip and several of the North Syrian towns, and was supported in the background by the King of Mitanni. If the rebels counted on the old age of Thothmes as their ally, they were woefully disappointed. Landing at a point on the Syrian coast north of Kadesh, he marched inland, cutting off Kadesh from its northern ally, Tunip. He then turned upon the latter, and captured it after a short resistance. Then turning upon his main enemy, he defeated him in battle before the walls of his city, and

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

then captured the city by storm, after a breach had been made in the walls. Our old friend Amenemhab, the elephant slayer, distinguished himself doubly on this occasion—first, by slaying a mare which the King of Kadesh had sent out before the Egyptian line of battle in order to break the array of the Egyptian chariot stallions, and next by being the first man to mount the breach and gain entrance into the city. The result of the lesson which was now taught to Tunip is seen in the loyalty with which that city nearly a century later held to the Egyptian cause in spite of neglect which seems almost incredible on the part of the Egyptian authorities.

It was, of course, the Syrian adventure which contributed most to the extension of the Egyptian Empire, and therefore that must bulk largest in any account of the reign of the great soldier Pharaoh. But the greatness of Thothmes was not merely that of a barren military adventurer, though so much of his reign was occupied with warfare either in Syria or Nubia. Though he extended the limits of his kingdom to the Euphrates on the north and nearly to Napata on the south, almost as important a part of his work as a king was the enrichment and orderly maintenance of the institutions of his own native realm. He was one of the greatest builders that even Egypt has ever seen, and in Egypt the remains of his work are to be seen on at least thirty different sites from the Delta to as far south as Soleb in Nubia. Indeed, the last ten years of his life seem to have been largely devoted to the work of consolidating Egyptian authority in Nubia, which, as the gold-producing province of the empire, was always of the greatest importance. His wonderfully beautiful and interesting work at Karnak

The Amarna Age

is dwarfed, in the minds of most visitors, by the more pretentious work of Ramses II.; but in truth it is almost as much superior to that of the later king as Thothmes is superior to Ramses as a soldier. Perhaps the most interesting part of his additions to the great temple of Amen is the so-called ambulatory of the great festal hall, with its columns tapering downwards towards the base, and its inverted capitals. The form is more curious than beautiful, and it was never repeated; but its main interest lies in the question of whether it may not have been inspired by Minoan practice, in which the downward taper was regular. The Minoan, however, working with wooden columns, had at least a structural excuse, if not a valid reason, for his extraordinary form; the Egyptian, with his normal stone construction, had neither reason nor excuse, and one experiment in this direction satisfied him that the practice was not suited either to his taste or his necessities. It is just possible that we may trace the fantastic idea to the king himself, for, like some other kings with less legitimate claims to distinction, he rather fancied himself as an artist, and was in the habit of helping or hindering his "Chief of the Overseers of Craftsmen" by furnishing him with designs for vessels of stone or metal drawn by the royal hand. He has recorded one of these at Karnak—"Of costly stone, which His Majesty made according to the design of his own heart." Menkheperresenb, the Chief of the Overseers, who was honoured (or burdened) with the execution of the royal designs, has also left us an inscription referring to them. "Viewing the workshop of the temple of Amen, the work of the craftsmen, in real lapis lazuli, and in real malachite, which His Majesty

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

made after the design of his own heart, to be monuments for his father, Amen." What he actually thought he has refrained, perhaps wisely, from putting upon record.

Apart from these little vanities, there can be no doubt of the constant watchfulness with which Thothmes presided over the destinies of his empire. "Lo," says his vizier Rekhmara, "His Majesty knew that which occurred ; there was nothing which he did not know. He was Thoth in everything ; there was no affair which he did not complete." His long and strong hand reached to the furthest extremity of the lands where he had made the name of Egypt feared, and if he plundered ruthlessly, at least he allowed no one to plunder but himself. No doubt a town like Tunip, accustomed to freedom, found it a bitter thing at first to have to pay its impost to the Pharaoh ; but the best part of a century of the Egyptian peace brought a change of outlook, and we find the rulers of Tunip writing ruefully to Akhenaten : " My Lord, Tunip, your servant speaks, saying : Who, formerly, could have plundered Tunip, without being plundered by Manakhbiria (Menkheperra, Thothmes III.) ? " So great was his reputation with his own countrymen in succeeding ages, that his name was held to be a magical protection against all sorts of evil, and Petrie has told us that, generally speaking, two out of every three named scarabs will bear the potent name of Menkheperra.

We have already noticed his likeness to Napoleon in the way in which he made war subserve the interests of knowledge ; another less important but curious resemblance between the two great soldiers lies in the minuteness with which every smallest detail of life was organised,

The Amarna Age

so that the great man might be always in the highest state of efficiency with the smallest expenditure of unnecessary energy. Readers of Napoleonic literature will remember the valet who had to wear Napoleon's new shoes, so that they might not be irksome to his master on putting them on, and the squealing pig which was thrown down before the charger which was being broken to the Emperor's use, in order to test the animal's steadiness. Just so Thothmes had his herald Intef, who travelled ahead of the army, and had the palace of the prince of each town which the king visited duly cleansed and prepared before the arrival of his king, so that all might be in order for the great man. "When My Lord arrived in safety where I was, I had prepared the palace. I had equipped it with everything that is desired in a foreign country, made better than the palaces of Egypt, purified, cleansed, set apart, their mansions adorned, each chamber for its proper purpose. I made the king's heart satisfied with that which I did." Though all this minuteness of detail might in a smaller man merely mark a petty mind, with men like Thothmes and Napoleon it was part of the system by which the whole machine was kept in constant readiness. Nothing was too small to be well done, because there was no such thing as an unimportant detail.

Altogether the impression left on the mind by the greatest of the Pharaohs of the empire is a singularly vivid, and on the whole a pleasant one. One seems to see not merely a great soldier and conqueror dealing with human lives with the ruthless impersonality which so often characterises such men, but rather a man, frank and open in the expression of his emotions, as in the



HEAD OF THOTHMES III.—SCHIST, CAIRO (*pp.* 58, 286)

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

case where he runs counter to the judgment of his officers in the Yehem council of war, and again when he rebukes his troops for their want of restraint on the battlefield. All the same, a man with whom it was by no means safe to trifle, who left few things unnoticed, and who was of tireless persistence in pursuing an object on which he had once set his mind. Kadesh might go on running up the bill for well-nigh twenty years; but it was duly presented at last, and Thothmes wrote "paid" beneath it before he closed his life-work. One undeniably unpleasant fly in the ointment of his fame is the paltry spite with which he pursued the memory of his great predecessor, Queen Hatshepsut. The spirit which inspired him to sheath in masonry the lower parts of Hatshepsut's magnificent obelisks at Karnak was surely unworthy of so great a man. Only again we do not know everything, and all the discussion which has clouded the story has spent itself without giving us one solitary glimpse which really counts into the actual reason for the deadly hatred which was undoubtedly there. Here, once more, there was a little touch of Napoleon, whose spite towards those of his family who offended him was as remarkable as his somewhat capricious love for them.

Apart from this failing, he stands out in the history of the ancient world with a clearness and a dignity attained by few other figures in any age. It is one of the ironies of history that his true place in the story of Egypt's greatness should have been obscured for so long by the braggart self-assertion of the vainglorious Ramses II., who, brave and energetic man as he undoubtedly was, was not worthy to loose the latchet of Thothmes' sandals.

The Amarna Age

Fortunately, the two men are now seen in something more like their true proportions, and we can realise the fact that beneath all the stilted artificiality of its metrical structure, the Hymn of Victory, which celebrated the might of the man who made Egypt a world-empire, actually conveys to the mind, not only the impression which the great king made upon his trembling contemporaries, but, with that, a good deal of the mere truth. Breasted's estimate does no more than justice to the combined force and originality of the man. "His reign marks an epoch not only in Egypt, but in the whole East as we know it in his age. Never before in history had a single brain wielded the resources of so great a nation, and wrought them into such centralised, permanent, and at the same time mobile, efficiency, that for years they could be brought to bear with incessant impact upon another continent as a skilled artisan manipulates a hundred-ton forge hammer; although the figure is inadequate unless we remember that Thutmose forged his own hammer. The genius which rose from an obscure priestly office to accomplish this for the first time in history reminds us of an Alexander or a Napoleon." One is pretty safe in saying that when a nation's fancy wreaths fairy tales of heroism and supernatural power around the figure of one of its legendary heroes, there must have been a really big fact at the beginning to account for such a phenomenon. The Song of Roland and the other tales of the Paladins of Charlemagne are by no means the least important testimony to the power of the great Emperor, nor the tales of the Knights of the Round Table negligible evidence for King Arthur. It is, perhaps, one of the marks of the real greatness of

Egypt's Rise to Supremacy

Thothmes that he also has attained to this legendary empire, which seems to be reserved for the very greatest alone. He is so much more ancient than our Alexanders and Charlemagnes and Arthurs, though more modern in many respects than most of them, that we can scarcely expect any wealth of legend to have survived concerning him; yet the mutilated tale of "How Tahuti took the Town of Joppa," preserved in Papyrus Harris 500 (the original of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves), gives us an adventure of one of the captains of Thothmes, whom we know from other sources to have been a genuine figure of history, and shows us how soon romance began to gather around the deeds and the belongings, such as the leading-staff, of the great king. "The Tale of the Doomed Prince," another of the treasures of the same papyrus, breathes the spirit of romantic adventure which found its fit dwelling in that strange land of Naharina, which the conquests of Thothmes had opened to his wondering fellow-countrymen; while least questionable of all testimonies to the greatness of the man in his nation's estimation is the fact that when an Egyptian at any time in the next fifteen centuries wished to choose an amulet inscribed with a name of magic power to guard himself or his belongings, the chances were two to one that he would choose one bearing the name of Thothmes.

CHAPTER II

THE CULMINATION OF EGYPTIAN GLORY: THE REIGN OF AMENHOTEP THE MAGNIFICENT

“Lo,” says Amenemhab, Thothmes’ stout old captain, “the king completed his lifetime of many years, splendid in valour, in might, and in triumph; from year 1 to year 54, third month of the second season, the last day of the month, under the Majesty of King Menkheperra, triumphant. He mounted to heaven, he joined the sun; the divine limbs mingling with him who begat him. When the morning brightened, the sun arose, and the heavens shone, King Aakheperura, Son of Ra, Amenhotep II., given life, was established upon the throne of his father, he assumed the royal titulary.”

With the accession of Amenhotep II., we reach the second stage in the history of the Egyptian Empire—the stage in which, for a few brief years, it remains poised on the summit of its achievement, before it begins the inevitable declension. The one mark which is common to all these monarchies and empires of the ancient world, and which distinguishes them sharply from the more broadly-based, and therefore, generally speaking, more stable empires of later times, is that they rest almost entirely upon character. The forceful character of the founder of the empire builds up the fabric; if his successors can show themselves to be possessed, even in a more

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

moderate degree, of something of the same energy, the work will remain comparatively stable ; but let a weakling or a ruler whose ideas diverge too widely from the general consensus of opinion come to the throne, and the empire dissolves as rapidly as it was created—sometimes the decline is even more tragically rapid. Rarely does an ancient empire maintain itself, once the falling off in energy has definitely declared itself in the ruling line, for the simple reason that the centralisation of all power and authority in the monarch's hands gave no chance for the establishment of a great governing machine, like that which in the case of the Roman Empire maintained the stability of the great fabric for centuries during which the nominal ruler was sometimes merely incompetent, and sometimes very little removed from a raving madman. It is but seldom that a single governing line maintains its efficiency beyond two or three generations at the same high level which marked its rise to power ; and the result is the constant fluctuation which is a characteristic feature of nearly all the great states of the ancient world. The governing machine never gets time to get thoroughly established and going with sufficient momentum to carry it over the obstacles caused by the incompetence of the weak successors of the empire-builders. This feature is manifest in the constant fluctuations of Assyrian power, and notably also in the case of the Hittite Empire, while the one seeming exception to the rule, the six centuries of sluggish Kassite sway in Babylonia, only proves the rule. The Kassites, *fainçants* as they were, certainly maintained their dynastic rule for six hundred years ; but during that time Babylon almost ceased to count as an important factor in the decision of the destiny of the

The Amarna Age

ancient world. Babylon, besides, had an almost unique tradition, and the nearest approach to a traditional governing machine to be found in the ancient east.

This law of the supremacy of character in the maintenance of an ancient empire is seen very manifestly in operation in the case of the Egyptian Empire of the XVIIIth Dynasty. The forcefulness of the early kings of the Theban stock maintains itself quite as long as one could expect, rather remarkably long in the case of a race given to such regular in-breeding; but it does not endure long enough for the creation of the solid governmental machine whose mere momentum will carry on independent of the presence or absence or misdirection of the supreme power. The Egyptian tradition of governing families, conspicuously seen during the Middle Kingdom, had been torn up by the roots during the Hyksos usurpation and the long War of Independence; and while the existing records, such as those of the vizier Rekhmara, show how careful was the attention which was given to organisation, there can be no doubt that the time granted to the new bureaucracy for the establishment of the new order was too short to ensure stability in the fabric of the empire.

The energy of the dynasty culminated in Thothmes III.; maintained itself with no very conspicuous decline, though with no evidence of guiding genius, in Amenhotep II.; manifestly began to fall off in Thothmes IV., whose physique (he is the solitary example of a deformed Pharaoh) was not equal to his undoubted spirit; showed itself chiefly in pursuit of pleasure in Amenhotep III.; and then went off into the erratic genius, which is "to madness near allied," in the person of the unfortunate



Photo W. F. Mansell

HEAD OF AMENHOTEP III.—QUARTZOSE SANDSTONE, BRITISH MUSEUM

(*pp.* 81, 94)

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

Amenhotep IV. After Akhenaten we have three nonentities to close a great line, whatever their blood relation to it, if any, may have been ; and the fragments of the ruined empire have to be laboriously picked up and pieced together, so far as possible, by the rough and commonplace but energetic soldier Horemheb and his successors. Even so, and treating with all respect the highly respectable achievement of the earlier Pharaohs of the XIXth Dynasty, the empire of Seti and Ramses II. was a poor second-best compared with that which Amenhotep III. neglected, and his son flung away for an idea.

“The builders were with lack of genius curst ;
The second temple was not like the first.”

It was Egypt's misfortune that her great line, much as it did for her, did not last long enough.

Decline and Fall, however, were far below the horizon when Amenhotep II. assumed the Double Crown. The new king had abundance of physical energy, at all events, whatever may have been his mental endowment ; and he was not long in being called upon to prove himself a worthy successor to his father. His accession was marked by the usual experimental revolt in the lately-conquered Syrian province, and one may imagine the world of the ancient east looking on benevolently, and with absolute impartiality, to see how the experiment would come off, and what stuff it would reveal in the young Pharaoh—its own attitude, of course, to be determined by the issue. Amenhotep was too near to his father's tradition to fail in the test. He marched out from Tharu, as Thothmes had done, in April, and early in May he had fought a battle at Shemesh-Edom in Northern Palestine. By the 12th

The Amarna Age

of May he was in the Orontes Valley, crossed the river, and fought a cavalry skirmish with a band of enemy chariots, in which he distinguished himself by personal valour. One of the picturesque touches of ancient warfare is preserved for us by the description of the king, with raised arm shading his eyes while he scans the horizon, and discerns the enemy chariots coming at the full speed of galloping horses. "His Majesty crossed over the ford of the Orontes on this day . . . like the might of Mentu of Thebes. His Majesty raised his arm, in order to see the end of the earth; His Majesty described a few Asiatics coming on horses, coming at a gallop. Behold His Majesty was equipped with his weapons, His Majesty conquered with the might of Set in his hour. They retreated when His Majesty looked at one of them. Then His Majesty himself overthrew their (chief) with his spear. . . . Behold, he carried away this Asiatic, his horses, his chariot, and all his weapons of battle. His Majesty returned with joy of heart to his father, Amen. He gave to him a feast. List of that which His Majesty captured on this day: his horses, two; chariots, one; a coat of mail; two bows; a quiver, full of arrows; a corselet."

A fortnight after this piece of knight-errantry, which no doubt gave more satisfaction to the young king than more important things, the army reached Niy, which either had remained loyal or quickly made up its mind to loyalty on the report of the Pharaoh's advance. "Behold these Asiatics of this city, men as well as women, were upon their walls, praising His Majesty." One more task remained before the king could turn his face homewards. This was the relief of the garrison of Ikathi, consisting of

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

Egyptian infantry, who had been besieged in the citadel since the outbreak of the revolt. This task also was successfully accomplished ; and at the furthest point of his march, and probably by the side of the memorials of his father and grandfather, the king's overseer and scribe, Minhotep, set up a commemorative tablet. On his Amada and Elephantine steles, Amenhotep mentions his return "from Retenu the Upper, having overthrown all his enemies, extending the boundaries of Egypt, on his first victorious campaign," and in his Karnak building inscription he states that "The chiefs of Mitanni come to him, their tribute on their backs, to beseech His Majesty that there may be given to them his sweet breadth of life. A mighty occurrence, it has never been heard since the time of the gods." On the strength of these claims, Breasted is inclined to believe that Amenhotep's limit probably surpassed that of his father, and that the claim to have extended the boundaries of Egypt is well founded ; but the Egyptian kings were rather too fond of asserting that anything of note which occurred under their rule was "a mighty occurrence which has never been heard since the time of the gods " for much stress to be laid on any single assertion of the kind.

On his return, Amenhotep carried with him seven unfortunate chiefs of Retenu, whom he had captured in Tikhsi. These poor wretches were reserved to be the subjects of a piece of brutality in which Amenhotep improved upon the barbarism of his grandfather, already noticed. Ancient warfare was never remarkable as a school of the gentler virtues, and things were habitually done in it as a matter of course which we should have shuddered at a few years ago. Perhaps the Egyptian was

The Amarna Age

not entitled to throw stones at any other nation in this respect, and those who have seen the reliefs in which severed hands and other members of the vanquished are piled before the Pharaoh as the most convenient way of numbering the slain know that he could be quite sufficiently brutal ; but at least he never reached the depth of barbarism which habitually characterised Assyrian warfare, and if Pharaoh actually clubbed his prisoners before Amen, as he is pictured in the act of doing, he did not flay them alive, tear out their tongues, or pile them one above another in a living pyramid to die slowly of suffocation. But the long continuance of war inevitably breeds, as we have ourselves learned, a callous disregard, not only for life, but for the decencies and chivalries which we love to consider specially soldierly virtues. We saw how Thothmes I. hung his dead Nubian enemy at the prow of his galley as he came northwards after his victory. Amenhotep now carried his grandfather's example a step further. The seven princes of Tikhsi were hanged head downwards from the prow of the king's galley as he approached Thebes. The poor half-suffocated wretches were then clubbed to death by his own hands in the presence of the image of Amen, and the bodies of six of them were hanged upon the battlements of the capital. The body of the seventh chief was reserved to teach Amenhotep's southern subjects the lesson of the fate of those who revolted against the might of Egypt.

An expedition was at once dispatched into Nubia, bearing along with it the dead body of the fallen Asiatic ; and at Napata, below the Fourth Cataract, this gruesome trophy was hung upon the walls of what was henceforth

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

to be the frontier post of the Egyptian Empire in the south, to strike terror into the hearts of the Nubians. "Then the other fallen one was taken up-river to Nubia, and hanged upon the wall of Napata, to manifest the victories of His Majesty for ever and ever in all lands and countries of the land of the Negro." All this is sufficiently brutal, and almost justifies the scorn with which one of the latest historians of Assyria has denounced the hypocrisy of those who accuse the Assyrian of cruelty. "The Assyrian," says his apologist, "cut off heads, while the Egyptian preferred hands or phalloi." This is the truth, stated with such careful economy as to be a great deal worse than straight falsehood! The gentle ministrations of the Assyrian trooper were by no means confined to the cutting off of heads, which, indeed, was the most innocent of his diversions. But the point of difference between the modes of warfare of the two races is that while both were guilty of brutalities, and while the Egyptian, like all other races of antiquity, even believed that cruelty might be well-pleasing to the god who had given him victory, it was the Assyrian alone who took the pictures of his unspeakable beastliness—no mere matters of cutting off heads—into his home, and gloated over them every day of his life. The Egyptian conqueror slew his prisoners before the Lord, and left the record of his doings there, and was done with it; the Assyrian preferred to see his victims die daily before his eyes in the marvellous reliefs with which he lined the rooms of his dwelling-house—a difference of taste which means quite as much as the action which is chronicled. Let us grant that the Egyptian could be quite cruel enough, and that at one point in his history he

The Amarna Age

saw red to an extent almost worthy of his later rival of the Tigris. He has recorded the fact to his own shame; but what Amenhotep did once, and deemed worthy of special record, Sennacherib or Ashur-bani-pal would scarcely have deemed worth mentioning; he did so many far more beastly things as a matter of course.

Amenhotep's first expedition was also his last. The work of his father had been so thoroughly done that once the subject races recognised the fact that the new king meant to maintain his predecessor's claims, they reconciled themselves to a suzerainty which apparently was far from oppressive, and for the remaining twenty years of his reign Amenhotep never needed to march out again, or to bend in anger the bow of which he boasted that there was not one who could bend it in his army, among the hill-sheikhs, or the princes of Retenu. Possibly the naïve boast is the measure of the man as compared with his father; Thothmes had other things to brag of. So far, at all events, he was no unworthy inheritor of the great tradition of Thothmes, that he suffered no diminution of his heritage. He left an empire whose limits were the widest ever attained by Egypt. The northern frontier was a line drawn from the Bay of Issus, south of the main mass of the Amanus Mountains, to the northern end of the Great Bend of the Euphrates, above Carchemish; the southern was practically at the Fourth Cataract, in what the Egyptians called Karoy, and we know as the Dongola province, the frontier post being Napata. No state of the ancient world had, up to that time, ever been able to claim anything like such an extent of territory; nor was Egypt destined to maintain its proud position for long. The

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

time of slack water has now come, and within fifty years the ebb will begin.

It has been repeatedly asserted, and generally accepted, that Thothmes IV., who succeeded his father, Amenhotep II., on the throne, was the son of the king by a secondary wife, and did not expect to inherit the crown. The evidence for this assertion, however, is exceedingly scanty, consisting of no more than a sentence or two in the inscription carved on the great stele which stands between the paws of the great Sphinx at Gizeh ; and it is very questionable if these sentences would ever have been held to bear such an interpretation as has been put upon them, had it not been for the passion which has possessed some historians of Egypt of assuming that the natural order of succession or of events is always to be suspected if an unnatural version can be twisted out of the evidence. The stele itself is interesting. It is formed from a block of granite which was once a lintel in the so-called Temple of the Sphinx near by—a fact which goes along with much other evidence to prove how little respect the ancient Egyptian had for the great works of his ancestors. The inscription tells how when Prince Thothmes was coursing in the desert near the Sphinx, which was then largely covered with sand, he lay down to sleep at midday in the shadow of the great statue. The god whom the Sphinx represents, Harmakhis-Kheperi-Ra-Atum, appeared to him in vision, and promised him the throne, requesting him at the same time to clear away the sand from his image.

The actual words of the god are these : “ Behold thou me ! See thou me ! my son Thothmes. I am thy father, Harmakhis-Kheperi-Ra-Atum, who will give to

The Amarna Age

thee my kingdom on earth at the head of the living. Thou shalt wear the white crown and the red crown upon the throne of Keb, the hereditary prince. The land shall be thine in its length and breadth, that which the eye of the All-Lord shines upon."

Now, the inscription itself is, to begin with, gravely suspect. Breasted, who builds on it as evidence of the irregularity of the succession, declares it to be a late restoration, and it is by no means unlikely that the whole story is a pious fiction of a kind not unknown in Egyptian history, by which the priests of the Sphinx attempted to glorify their god. Further, it is quite safe to assert that the unprejudiced reader, who is in the habit of believing that a natural explanation is generally preferable to an unnatural one, whether in matters of royal succession or anywhere else, would never have dreamed of seeing here the evidence of a disputed succession, had it not been suggested to him. The promise of the god is a simple one of establishing the prince in the kingdom, and might have been made quite as properly to the direct heir as to one out of the line of inheritance. Maspero's supposition that Thothmes legitimised his position by marrying the princess Mutemuya falls to the ground before the fact that Mutemuya is the Mitannian princess whom the king married, and not an Egyptian princess at all. The king's mother, Ta-aa, is called "royal mother and wife" on the double statue where she appears with her son—titles which would not have been given to her, had her position been a secondary one; and altogether the evidence for a disturbed succession is far too flimsy to bear the structure which has been built upon it.

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

However he may have come to the throne, the young king was not long in giving evidence that, in spite of his somewhat feeble physique, he possessed something of the spirit of his father and grandfather. Syria apparently revolted, after its twenty years of quiescence, when the news of the death of Amenhotep reached it. There is no direct evidence of the fact; but a fragment of an inscription at Karnak mentions things "which His Majesty captured in Naharin the wretched, on his first victorious campaign"; and Amenhotep, one of the royal guardsmen, mentions on his tomb stele, that he was "Attendant of the king on his expedition in the south and north countries; going from Naharin to Karoy behind His Majesty, while he was upon the battlefield." Passing through the Lebanon region, he took advantage of the opportunity to secure cedar timber for the great barge of Amen, and refers, in his additions to the inscriptions of the Lateran Obelisk, to the "new cedar, which His Majesty cut in the land of Retenu." The northern expedition fulfilled its purpose, and during the rest of the short reign of Thothmes, the tribute of the north came in regularly, as is evidenced by the one relief in the tomb of Khaemhat which refers to this reign, "bringing in the tribute of Naharin by the princes of the country, in order to crave that the breadth of life be granted to them."

From the northern boundary of his empire, Thothmes was speedily summoned to the southern by the news of a revolt which had broken out in Nubia. "One came to say to His Majesty: 'The Negro descends from above Wawat; he hath planned revolt against Egypt. He gathers to himself all the barbarians and the revolters of other countries.'" "The king," as his Konosso inscrip-

The Amarna Age

tion puts it, "proceeded upstream like Orion. He illuminated the South with his beauty ; men shouted because of his kindness, women danced at the message." This diplomatic description of the passage of a warlike king with an avenging army is followed by the statement that the rebels, doubtless wisely, all ran away on His Majesty's approach. "The fear of him entered into everybody. . . . He found all his foes scattered in inaccessible valleys."

The only other recorded act of importance in the reign is a pleasing and pious one. The great single obelisk, 105½ feet in height, the tallest surviving example of its kind, and the only single obelisk ever erected in Egypt, which now stands before the church of S. Giovanni in Laterano in Rome, was the last of the great works of the king's grandfather, Thothmes III. It had never been set up on its base, however, and had lain for thirty-five years at Karnak. Thothmes IV. now had it duly set up, and with a piety very uncommon among Egyptian kings, and of which, perhaps, he and Seti I. were the only Pharaohs who would have been capable, he dedicated it, not in his own name, but in that of the man who first gave orders for its creation. "Thothmes IV., Begotten of Ra, Beloved of Amen," runs the inscription which he added to that of his grandfather. "It was His Majesty who beautified the single, very great obelisk, being one which his father, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Menkheperra had brought, after His Majesty had found this obelisk, it having spent thirty-five years lying upon its side in the hands of the craftsmen, on the south side of Karnak. My father commanded that I should erect it for him, I, his son, his saviour. It was graven with the name of his father, the Good God, Menkheperra. The

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the Two Lands, Menkheperura (Thothmes IV.), Beloved of Ra, did this in order to cause that the name of his father might abide and endure in the house of Amen-Ra, that the Son of Life, Thothmes IV., Shining-in-Diadems, may be given life through him."

It was a pretty piece of piety, honourable to the man who did it, quite as much as to the great memory for which it was done; but it brought no length of days to the king who so honoured his fathers, for the reign of Thothmes IV. cannot have been longer than the nine years and eight months which Manetho gives him, and was possibly not longer than eight years. Short though his tenure of power was, it was marked by one development of Egyptian policy which was destined to have consequences, direct and indirect, of the utmost importance to the future of the Egyptian Empire. This was the alliance which was now formed between Egypt and Mitanni, and which was cemented by the marriage of the Pharaoh to a Mitannian princess—the first occasion, so far as is known, of an Egyptian king wedding the daughter of a foreign monarch. An understanding between the two states, whose relationships so far had been hostile in the main, was probably forced upon both by the stress of the international situation. By this time the growing power of the Hittites must have been making itself felt, and probably Mitanni felt that it was better to ally itself with the power which was not only to all appearance the mightiest on earth, but was also so far removed that alliance need not become irksome. The Hittites were too near and too aggressive to make an alliance with them desirable; Egypt, the power which had already

The Amarna Age

arrived, and whose empire-hunger was presumably satisfied, was the more suitable ally. Egypt also, no doubt, considered that an alliance with the power whose frontier marched with her own was the best means of safeguarding the outlying parts of her empire.

As a matter of fact, however, Egypt, in thus committing herself to Mitanni, was putting her money on the wrong horse. The kingdom of Mitanni, as we have already seen, was an artificial creation, with no deep roots in the natural conditions to ensure its endurance; and indeed its meridian was now past, and its decline had set in. Could the advisers of Thothmes IV. have foreseen the developments of the next thirty years, they would no doubt have realised that the wise policy was to come to an agreement, not with the decadent Mitanni, but with the really aggressive Hittite power. Such an alliance, with an agreed delimitation of the respective spheres of influence of the two powers, might have saved both a century of exhausting warfare, and checked the growth of Assyria for an indefinite period. Pharaoh's councillors, however, are not to be blamed for their lack of the prophetic gift. Men have to deal with the facts as they appear at the time, and they did their best on that footing; the wisdom which can see so plainly now where they erred, would probably have seen no further through the riddle of the sphinx of their day than they did.

Even more vital to the destiny of Egypt than the new political grouping which was thus brought about was the impulse to new developments of thought and religious innovation which the Mitannian alliance brought to bear on the already shaken conservatism of Egypt. This was an aspect of the alliance which no adviser could have

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

foreseen; yet it is scarcely doubtful that the religious influence had more to do with the decline of the Egyptian Empire than the political. It is conceivable that Egypt's strength would have been sufficient to meet even the strain of the advance of the Hittites, and the collapse of Mitanni, had it been used as Thothmes III., or even Amenhotep II., would have used it; but when, to the political strain, was added the paralysing influence of the pacifist ideas which Amenhotep IV. extracted from his universalism, it proved too much for the half-consolidated fabric of the empire. What share the influence of the new alliance had in the religious movement of Akhenaten we have no means of determining; but undoubtedly Mitanni played its part.

All this, however, was far below the horizon when Thothmes IV. sent his first embassy to the court of King Artatama of Mitanni at Washshukkani to ask for the hand of his daughter in marriage. Tushratta, the grandson of Artatama, writing to Akhenaten, gives us an admirable fairy tale of the reluctance with which Artatama consented to allow his daughter to become the wife of the mightiest monarch of the ancient world. "When Thothmes IV., father of Nimmuria (Nebmaatra, Amenhotep III.), sent to Artatama, my grandfather, and made request for the daughter of my grandfather, the sister of my father, for himself, he sent five times, six times, but he never gave her. Moreover, he made request a seventh time, and then, driven by circumstances, he (my grandfather) gave her." Having regard to the relative importance of the two monarchs concerned, one may be fairly certain that Artatama was actually out of the body with delight at the prospect

The Amarna Age

of such a marriage for his daughter. It was due to his own dignity and to the young lady's modesty that a proper show of reluctance should be made ; but one does not imagine that Thothmes suffered any undue anxiety as to the ultimate fate of his addresses. Sooner or later, in any case, the match was made, and the Mitannian princess came down into Egypt, and was wedded to Thothmes, taking the Egyptian name of Mutemuya—"Mother-in-the-Boat." In her brief married life she became the mother of the last of the great Pharaohs of the prosperous days of the empire, Amenhotep III., who was thus of half-Asiatic, or rather half-Indo-European, blood. Mitanni's new position as an ally meant that Egyptian ambition must now resign all prospect of expansion eastwards. Northwards, the path, so far as Mitanni was concerned, was still open ; but already the ominous shadow of the Hittite was falling across the northern frontier, to say nothing of the lands beyond. Egypt's Asiatic empire was barred absolutely from any further extension. The alliance with Babylon, which may be inferred from a sentence in the first letter of Amenhotep III. to Kadashman-Kharbe in the Tell el-Amarna Letters, serves also to mark the peaceful direction which the thoughts of the Egyptian politicians were now taking—not that the wildest imagination of an Egyptian conqueror can ever have contemplated as a serious possibility any warlike enterprise so far from his base as an attempt on the Babylonian plain would have drawn him. The "haves"—Egypt, Babylon, and Mitanni—were apparently fairly well satisfied with the existing state of affairs, and would fain have stabilised it ; but the "have-nots"—the Hittites and Assyria—were

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

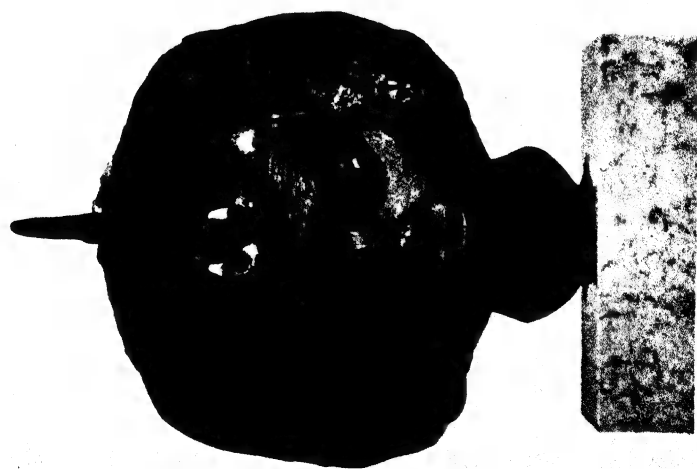
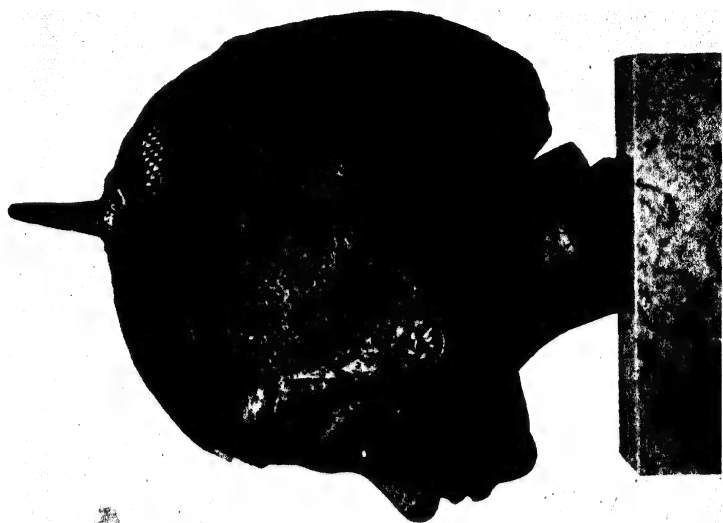
of a different opinion; and among the restless Amorite tribes of North Syria there were never lacking troubled waters in which they could find good fishing.

Thothmes IV. died before reaching his twenty-sixth year, and indeed may not have been much more than twenty when he was laid to rest in his tomb in the Valley of the Kings. Shifted thence in the panic consequent on the tomb-robberies of the Ramesside period, he was laid, along with his famous son, Amenhotep III., and other royalties, in the tomb of his father, Amenhotep II., where he was found on the opening of the tomb by M. Loret in 1898. His own tomb was the first of a series discovered by Mr. T. M. Davis, and was opened in 1908. It had, of course, been rifled in ancient days, but much material of interest was still left, particularly the royal war-chariot, whose front, of wood, overlaid with linen covered with gesso, which is wrought with battle-scenes in low-relief, is one of the most elaborate pieces of artistic work which have survived from the time of the empire. He was succeeded by his son, Amenhotep III., who, though he must have been a mere boy, according to Western ideas, at his accession, was married in his second year to his famous queen, Tiy, and thus brought into the situation another influence which was to be in the end perhaps the most potent of all.

The new king was destined to be the last of the Pharaohs who ruled over the full extent of the empire which his warlike ancestors had won; so short was the life of the supreme glory of Egypt. The high-water mark of Egyptian conquest and empire was probably reached when Thothmes III., in his eighth campaign, crossed the Euphrates, and won the battle of Carchemish—say

The Amarna Age

about 1467 B.C. Within a century of that time the empire which he had won at the point of the sword was already beginning to fall to pieces, and by 1360 there was scarcely a vestige left of all that he had fought for in Syria. The fact is that militarism in Egypt was an entirely unnatural growth. Ruskin's high appreciation of the achievement of ancient Egypt did not hinder him from an entire misapprehension of the national character when he spoke of "this great soldier race." A soldier race the Egyptians never were, and probably never will be. The Egyptian's natural attitude towards a soldier's life is quite adequately reflected in the maxims of some of his ancient sages, who will have none of it at any price, preferring the life of a scribe, with its smug self-satisfaction and the supercilious contempt of the lettered man for the mere man of action, to all the military glory in the world. He and Falstaff would have been thoroughly agreed that "honour is a mere scutcheon," whose inability to set a leg or take away the grief of a wound sufficiently damned it in the judgment of every man of sense. For a little while his natural disinclination to warlike enterprise was overborne by the delirium of the War of Independence, and the consequent impulse which was given to conquest both by the desire for revenge on the hated Hyksos oppressors, and the surprising discovery that he could actually fight when he made up his mind to it; but when once that brief fever of the blood subsided, he reverted quite gladly to the normal rôle for which Nature had designed him, of being the finest craftsman on earth, and left conquest and empire to fools like the Assyrians, who had a natural love for danger, wounds, and bloodshed.



HEAD OF QUEEN TIY (pp. 83, 84, 293-4)
From Fechheimer's "Die Plastik de Ägypten" (Cassier)

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

Amenhotep III. was the fitting interpreter of the national mind in this respect. Energetic enough when he chose, and in pursuit of objects in which he was really interested, as his hunting scarabs and the record of the number of lions who fell to his bow show, he had none of the lust for power which drove Thothmes afield year after year, and burned unquenched in him even after he had reached his seventieth year. His rôle was rather to sum up in his own person all the splendour which his ancestors had won for Egypt, before it was to pass away forever. He was to be the incarnation to all time of Egyptian magnificence, the true "Roi Soleil" of the ancient world, though he had none of the force of Louis, and though spiritually it was his son who might have claimed the title. To be the most splendid representative of what Mr. Walter Bagehot has called "the relishing, enjoying, sensitive life"—this was his destiny, and he accomplished it with considerable success, dying of it, apparently a worn-out old man, perhaps before he was fifty. To compare great things with small, he was the Egyptian Solomon, though his David belonged to half a century before him.

To begin with, he was god on earth. Every Egyptian king, of course, was "the Good God" to his subjects as distinguished from "the Great God," Amen, Ra, or Ptah, whose abode was in Heaven; but in Amenhotep's case, following the precedent which had been set by Queen Hatshepsut, his godhead was not only official. Amen, the great god of the empire, had, according to the version in the temple of Luxor, taken the form of Thothmes IV., and become the father of the Pharaoh by Mutemuya. To one trained from his infancy to regard himself in such a

The Amarna Age

light, and surrounded with all the enormous wealth which the Syrian wars and the steady tribute of gold from Nubia had been accumulating in Thebes, there must have been a strong temptation to regard the kingship much as Leo X. regarded the Papacy when he was elevated to it. "Since God has given it to Us, let Us enjoy it." At all events enjoyment was to be the note of his reign, as conquest had been that of his great-grandfather. The profound peace in which his reign began must have prompted him in the same direction. Apparently the usual Syrian revolt was lacking on the occasion of his accession ; and indeed, though we have the record in a casual remark in one of the Tell el-Amarna letters of a visit which he once paid to Sidon, there is no evidence of his ever having been obliged to show himself in Syria at the head of an army ; it would have been better for his empire if necessity had forced him to do so. Nor, after the Nubian campaign which he conducted in his fourth or fifth year, was there any further cause for him to vindicate Egyptian authority in the southern part of his kingdom any more than in the northern. For at least thirty years out of his thirty-six, his whole empire lay in a state of profound peace, so far as any evidence which reached the king at Thebes went. There were a few letters from vassals in North Syria, reporting trouble with other vassals, and movements of raiding parties, which might have seemed ominous to more anxious minds, and would certainly have sent Thothmes III. up into Syria at the head of an adequate force, to enquire into affairs. Otherwise the Egyptian peace reigned over all the king's world. The inducements to self-indulgence, and the development of all the resources of æsthetic

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

enjoyment which lay around him, were overwhelming, and we need not wonder that the story of the reign of Amenhotep is simply a story of the culmination of luxury, and its manifestation in such magnificent works of art and architecture as have often in a nation's history marked the point of pause where everything is ripe and almost over-ripe, but where decay has scarcely yet set in.

Very early in his reign, and certainly before his second year, the king married one of the most remarkable women of Egyptian history, whose influence was by no means the least important factor in shaping the destiny of the empire. There is no evidence to prove that Queen Tiye was actually, as Breasted states, "a woman of low birth." Certainly she was not of royal descent; but her parents occupied by no means humble positions at the Egyptian court, and there was nothing whatever of the King Cophetua and the Beggar-maid business in the marriage which took place between the young king and the daughter of the princely priest of Min and his wife, the Mistress of the Robes at the royal court. The fact that the Pharaoh was marrying an Egyptian who was not of solar blood, instead of a princess of the royal house or a Mitannian royalty, is quite sufficient reason for the statement which Amenhotep, or his council for him, makes in the memorial scarab with the issue of which he celebrated his wedding, without our having to suppose that the young Pharaoh was replying, "with unflinching boldness," to criticisms of his marriage. In point of fact the young couple can scarcely have been more than beginning their teens at the date of their marriage, so that one can scarcely imagine a great deal of initiative on Amenhotep's part in the matter. The inscription of

The Amarna Age

the famous marriage-scarabs runs as follows : " Live . . . King Amenhotep (III.), who is given life, and the Great King's Wife Tiy, who liveth. The name of her father is Iuaa, the name of her mother is Tuui. She is the wife of a mighty king, whose southern boundary is as far as Karoy, and his northern as far as Naharin." The question of whether the parents of the new queen were or were not of Mesopotamian origin remains unsettled, though it may be said that the evidence that they were anything else than decent native Egyptians is of the slightest. Of course by this time, with the constant intercourse which had for generations been going on between Egypt and Asia, and with the presence in Egypt of generation after generation of young Asiatic princes and nobles under training for their positions as vassals of Egypt, there can have been few noble Egyptian families which had not some admixture, greater or less, of Asiatic blood ; but that is quite another matter. Amenhotep himself was half a Mitannian through his mother, but he was a true Egyptian all the same.

Be all this as it may, there is at least no question as to the supreme influence which the young queen henceforth exercised upon her devoted husband and lover. Her portraits, if the German Fayum head in ebony and gold is to be accepted as hers, as the Sinai head unquestionably is, represent her as by no means beautiful. The face is rather one of a woman of considerable force of character, and the Fayum head distinctly suggests suffering as one of the elements which have produced this. Amenhotep himself, pleasure-loving as he was, was by no means a weakling—if the great head in the British Museum is a fair portrait of him ; but he identified his

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

queen with himself in a manner previously unknown in Egyptian history, though his son followed the good example. Tiy's name is coupled with the king's even in documents where one would scarcely have looked for mention of her, as in the great scarab with which the Pharaoh celebrated his marriage to Gilukhipa (Kirgipa), daughter of Shutarna, King of Mitanni. Even the advent of this princess, with her brigade of maids-of-honour, made no difference to the pre-eminence of Tiy, and the marriage-scarab runs thus: "Year 10, under the Majesty of the Son of Ra, Amenhotep III., Ruler of Thebes, who is granted life; and the great King's Wife, Tiy, who liveth, the name of whose father was Iuaa, the name of whose mother was Tuiu. Marvels brought to His Majesty (Life, Health, Strength!), Kirgipa, the daughter of the chief of Naharin, Satirna, and the chief of her harem-ladies, namely 317 persons." What poor Gilukhipa thought of such a method of welcoming her, and proclaiming her unquestionably ample equipment of maids, is another story!

It is scarcely to be wondered at, that with a young king and queen and an empire profoundly peaceful, there should have been a good deal of pleasure and luxury in the early days of the reign. Indeed, it is difficult for the Western mind, accustomed to slower maturity, to realise the extreme youth of the men and women whom we find ruling great states, leading armies, and settling policies. Akhenaten had created a religious revolution, and changed the whole destiny of the eastern world at an age when in a modern country he would scarcely have left school, or would at most have been beginning an University career. His father and mother, as we have seen,

The Amarna Age

were scarcely in their teens when they were married; in actual fact, it is doubtful if they had even reached so mature an age, which can only have been the case if Thothmes IV. married Mutemuya while he was still only Crown Prince. At all events the boy-king showed at a very early stage of his reign that he had something of the vigour of his great-grandfather, and that if he was not to lead great armies to conquest it was not because of any deficiency in vitality and energy. For it is in his second year that we have the scarab describing the great hunt of wild cattle which was organised for him, apparently in the Delta, and in which His Majesty slew in two days seventy-five out of the hundred and seventy which composed the herd. During all his earlier years, at least, Amenhotep was "a mighty hunter before the Lord," though his record as a lion-slayer can scarcely compare with that of Tiglathpileser I. of Assyria, three hundred years later. The claim which Amenhotep makes in the hunting scarab which he issued in his tenth year is quite modest beside that of the Assyrian king. "Statement of lions which His Majesty brought down with his own arrows from year 1 to year 10: fierce lions 102." The Assyrian had greater opportunities, or perhaps a brighter imagination, or a less sensitive conscience, and makes a much more brilliant story out of his big-game hunting—"Under the auspices of Ninurta my patron, I killed 120 lions in my youthful ardour, in the fulness of my manly might on my own feet, and 800 lions I killed from my chariot." The courage which could make such statements is quite as remarkable as the actual facts can possibly have been; and we may give Amenhotep the credit of having tried to keep at least a

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

comparatively decent proportion between the story and the truth.

All this, however, was play, and the young king had more serious matters to attend to. The peace of the empire was broken in the fifth year by a revolt in Nubia, which had not quite learned the lesson of the dead body of the Tikhsi chief. Amenhotep himself commanded the expedition which went south to assert Egyptian authority, and easily routing the rebels, he set up his tablet of victory at "The Pool of Horus" (Kebehu-Hor)—a spot unidentified, but seemingly further south than the limit of any preceding advance. "There was no king of Egypt who did the like beside His Majesty, the mighty, satisfied with victory, Nebmaatra (Amenhotep III.), is he." A sentence in the Bubastis inscription which apparently describes this expedition is worthy of notice as one of the few instances in which the ancient scribe gives us a detail of natural scenery. "Third month of the first season . . . the north wind was very high for the coming forth of the Height of Hua; the coming forth of this height was in safety." One figures the look-out on the foremost of the long line of warships driving swiftly south under the big square sails, and the strong north wind, anxiously watching for the landmark which was to point out the camping ground, and seeing it rising across the desert sands like the topsails of a ship at sea. Easy as the victory had been, it was sufficient, and Nubia gave no further trouble in the reign of Amenhotep, or even during the troubles of Akhenaten's time.

With peace thus secured in the only quarter of the empire where there had been any unrest, Amenhotep was able to turn his attention to matters at home which were

The Amarna Age

no doubt a good deal more to his taste. Thebes, which under his three predecessors had steadily grown in splendour, and was, indeed, absorbing an undue share of the treasure which the Syrian wars and the Nubian gold tribute had been pouring into Egypt, was now to be adorned with buildings, both religious and secular, on a scale of beauty and magnificence never before reached in Egyptian history ; while the populace of the great city was familiar with royal processions and festivities whose glittering splendour must have made a striking contrast with the cramped quarters and narrow circumstances of most of the folks who looked on and worshipped as the Good God passed by. Amenhotep has been described as the first of the Pharaohs to begin the breaking down of the old tradition which separated the King of Egypt by an awful gulf from the noblest of his subjects. "This lion-hunting, bull-baiting Pharaoh, who had made a woman of lowly birth his queen, was far indeed from the godlike and unapproachable immobility of his divine ancestors." But it is very questionable if the king seemed any less godlike to the folks who read on his hunting scarabs of marvellous feats of daring which none of them would ever have deemed possible to ordinary humanity ; and, on the other hand, it is equally questionable if the ancient Pharaohs of the Old and Middle Kingdoms—to say nothing of those of the earlier empire—were quite so unapproachable as the theory requires. Pharaoh was always God Incarnate ; but the Westcar Papyrus shows us King Khufu bored to death, and craving to be amused by fairy stories in a very human fashion, while his revered ancestor Seneferu has to be delivered from his ennui by a boating expedition which reminds one quite

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

forcibly of Amenhotep's fantasia, save that it was scarcely so respectable ; while Senusert I., in the Middle Kingdom, chaffs the returned exile Sinuhe in a fashion which suggests that he did not take his divinity unduly seriously, and Thothmes III. in the days of the empire slew elephants, or ran away from them, with no more regard for the divinity that doth hedge a king than Amenhotep showed in his lion-hunts. Theory and practice were, no doubt, then, as they always have been and will be, two very different things, and if Amenhotep III. had a human side to his godhead, so had his ancestors. Possibly a greater break with tradition was the rearing of the royal palace, not on the east bank of the Nile at Thebes, but on the west bank, which was normally the home of the dead. Perhaps the project of the pleasure-lake, which Amenhotep had in his mind, may have had to do with the shifting of the royal residence across the river and away from the crowded eastern plain. Here, at the foot of the Libyan hills, and looking across the plain to the towering twin colossi of gritstone which his namesake the son of Hapu was setting up in front of the great temple which should keep the king's name alive, and over the river to the new glories of pylon and colonnade which he was adding to Karnak and Luxor, Amenhotep built, somewhere about his tenth year, a home for himself and Tiy, with accommodation, no doubt, somewhere in the background, for Queen Gilukhipa and her 317 maids of honour. The palace has been excavated—or rather its miserable remains have been excavated—by Messrs. Newberry and Tytus, and again examined by Messrs. Winlock and White, and the results are such as to confirm the old statement of Diodorus that the Egyptians regarded their homes as

The Amarna Age

temporary lodging-places. Pharaoh's palace had none of the monumental quality of an Assyrian palace, or of the Knossian Labyrinth, which was now on the verge of its destruction. It was a mud-brick building, like other Egyptian houses, wood-framed, and with wooden columns and porticoes and galleries, and probably it was low and rambling, and covered a considerable area. One imagines a building aiming not so much at overpowering grandeur, as at good taste in its proportions and decorations. The fragments of painted pavement and ceiling which have survived show us that Amenhotep, like his unfortunate son, loved to have nature brought indoors for the delight of the eye; and the scheme of decoration, with its water-fowl swimming through clumps of lotus, and pigeons fluttering overhead against a sky of blue, must have been pleasing and restful. The rooms, of course, would be furnished with all that Egyptian art could produce of best in design and craftsmanship; and the exquisite and satisfying proportions and delicate decoration of the furniture found in the tomb of Iuaa and Tuiu, to say nothing of the gorgeousness of that from the tomb of Tutankhamen, shows us how splendidly the Pharaoh's chambers were equipped, even though the material fabric of his palace were humble enough. "This," says Dr. Hall, "was a palace of mud, it is true, but it was beautifully decorated, and we must imagine it as a painted summer-house of cool passages and loggias, with light roofs upheld by carved wooden pillars on stone bases, and tent-like awnings of brightly coloured stuffs to keep off the sun, placed by the side of the great artificial lake of Tjarukha, on which Amenhotep and Tii were wont to sail with their court in the golden barge, *Tehen-Aten*, 'The Sun-Disk gleams.'"

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

It was this artificial lake of Tjarukha, for whose sake perhaps the palace had been brought to the western bank of the Nile, which made one of the significant fancies of the reign; and the splendid water-festival with which its completion was celebrated was, with all its brilliance, one of the shadows of coming events cast before on the golden glories of the reign. Amenhotep and Tiy thought enough of their new toy to record the completion of the lake on another of the commemorative scarabs which characterise the period. "Year 11, third month of the first season, day 1, under the Majesty of . . . Amenhotep III., given life; and the Great King's Wife Tiy, who liveth. His Majesty commanded to make a lake for the Great King's Wife, Tiy, in her city of Tjarukha. Its length is 3,700 cubits; its width, 700 cubits. His Majesty celebrated the feast of the opening of the lake in the third month of the first season, day 16, when His Majesty sailed thereon in the royal barge, *Tehen-Aten*, 'The Sun-Disk gleams.'" This costly little piece of luxury is an evidence of the admirable organisation and efficiency of Egyptian labour, for the lake, rather more than a mile long and over a thousand feet wide, was finished in fifteen days; but the real significance of the whole affair lies in the title of the gilded barge in which the royal couple sailed over the waters of their new toy. For the name *Tehen-Aten* is the first official appearance of a title which was within twenty-five years to become to the royal house the most holy thing in the world, and to the great majority of Egyptians a sinister portent of disaster and apostacy. But that was far ahead, and none of the thousands who watched the glittering pageant as it drifted along, mirrored

The Amarna Age

in the waters of Tjarukha, read anything ominous in the cloud like a man's hand, which was to darken the whole heaven of the ancient faith. Whether the Aten whose shining Amenhotep celebrated in the name of his barge meant to him at this stage anything like what it came to mean later to their son may be doubted; but the fact that the name was brought into such prominence indicates that a seed of the new doctrine was already springing into life. From the point of view of subsequent events that trifling water fantasia is by far the most important event of the reign of Amenhotep.

Meanwhile, whatever doubts as to the orthodox faith of Egypt may have been growing up in the mind of the Pharaoh, or perhaps more probably in that of Queen Tiy, Amenhotep remained at least outwardly faithful to the gods of his fathers, and evidenced his devotion by the magnificent buildings which he reared at Karnak and Luxor in the capital, at Elephantine, and especially at Sedeinga in Nubia, and at Soleb, where the splendid granite lions, now in the British Museum and bearing the name of Tutankhamen, originally stood before they were removed to Gebel Barkal by the Ethiopian Pharaoh Amen-asru. The Sedeinga temple gives notable evidence of the king's love for Tiy. It was built, says his inscription, "for the great and mighty heiress, the mistress of all lands, Tiy." The greatest architectural achievements of the reign, however, were found, naturally, at Thebes. Amenhotep did an enormous amount of work at Karnak; but unfortunately his additions to the great temple are somewhat scattered, and do not produce the impression which is made by the more concentrated work at Luxor. There he reared two great buildings of the

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

greatest importance in the history of Egyptian architecture—the noble forecourt, with its finely proportioned papyrus-bud columns, and the great colonnade, which apparently was meant to form the nave of a huge hypostyle hall like the famous one at Karnak. To those great works we shall have to return in the next chapter.

The greatest of his architectural achievements, however, if we may judge by his own account of it, was the funerary temple which he built on the western plain, and dedicated to his father Amen, and to his own worship after death. Unfortunately the inscription is almost all that we have to judge it by, for that monumental vandal, Ramses II., carried off most of its material to build his own Ramesseum, and what Ramses spared his son Merenptah duly appropriated. It was from the funerary temple of the latter that Petrie in 1897 unearthed the great black granite stele on which Amenhotep had engraved the description of the now vanished glories of his memorial temple. The stele had had an eventful history since the day when it was first set up in the court of the great building. Its inscription was almost entirely obliterated by the fanatical zeal of Akhenaten; but the sculptors of Seti I. found the lines of the old writing still legible enough to allow of a restoration, which, though not without manifest blunders, is still tolerably complete. Seti's grandson, Merenptah, however, had none of his grandfather's piety, and saw no use in allowing a fine slab of granite to lie useless among the wreck which the spoliations of his father Ramses had left. He took the stele, turned its face to the wall, and engraved on its back the famous Song of Victory, whose mention of Israel has excited more interest than all the rest of

The Amarna Age

Merenptah's achievements put together. It was then set up in his own memorial temple, where it remained till the modern explorer recovered it and gave its two inscriptions to the world. With that of Merenptah we have here nothing to do ; the original one of Amenhotep, with its details of the most splendid building of his reign, will claim attention in the next chapter.

Thus, surrounded by the constantly growing monuments of his power and piety and artistic tastes, and by every gratification which the senses could desire, unvexed by any urgent call to action outside the bounds of the Nile Valley, the last of the great emperors spent the golden days of his thirty-six years' reign. Though Queen Tiy had borne him several daughters, there had been no heir to the throne until the royal couple had reigned for twenty-five or twenty-six years ; and the joy in the royal palace must have been great when the birth was announced of the young prince who was afterwards to be known, first as Amenhotep IV., and then as Akhenaten. No dream that she was delivered of a burning torch which should set fire to her palace came to mar the joy of Queen Tiy ; yet such a vision might have been even more appropriate to her than to Hecuba, even as her son was destined to work a wider ruin than ever Paris did. The birth of Akhenaten was followed by that of Baktaten, afterwards apparently the favourite sister of the young king, whose name is another indication of the grip which the new ideas of divinity were getting in the court circle. There were at least four princesses older than Akhenaten—Ast and Hentmerheb, Satamen and Henttaneb—and one may imagine a very gay and happy as well as splendid court in the

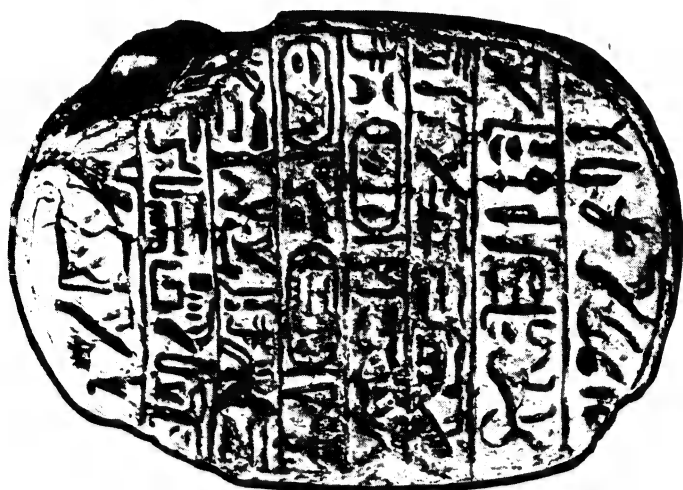
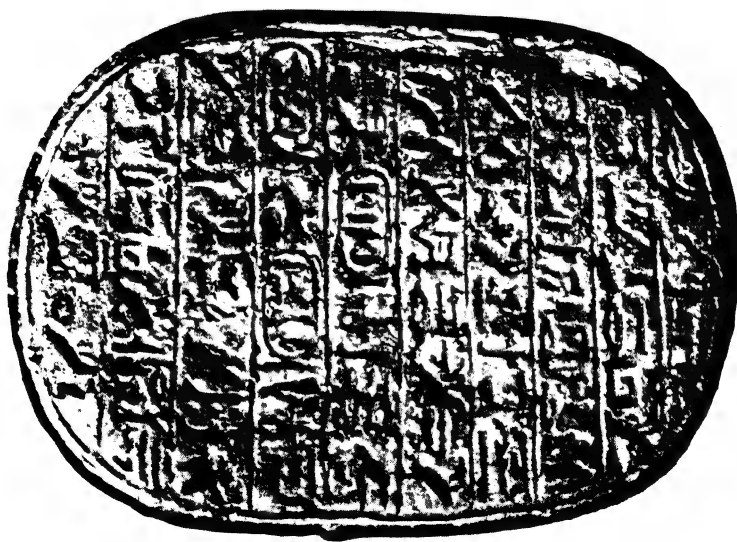
The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

palace on the western bank. As to the poor Mitannian princess who had been thrust for diplomatic reasons into the midst of this scene of family happiness, where there was apparently no place for her, she remains to the last pretty much the shadow of a name, great or otherwise. Seemingly there was no complaint against the way in which she was thrust into the background, for we find her brother, Tushratta of Mitanni, mentioning her in his first letter to Amenhotep in a manner which does not suggest any misgivings—"With Gilukhipa, my sister, may it be well," and sending her a few articles of personal adornment as a gift—"And for a present to Gilukhipa, my sister, have I sent to her one breast-ornament of gold, one pair of golden earrings, one *mashu* of gold, and a jar full of good oil." She appears again for a moment, though unnamed, in the third letter of Tushratta to Akhenaten, where the Mitannian king tells the fairy story of how often the kings of Egypt had to ask for Mitannian princesses in marriage before they got them, and makes the same statement about Gilukhipa that he had just made about Mutemuya ; then she vanishes. Evidently, however, Mitanni was well enough satisfied with the treatment of its princess to raise no objections when Amenhotep, towards the end of his reign, made request for another bride for himself. Tushratta makes fuss enough about the gold which Amenhotep is to send him in return for his new wife ; but in the end she is sent with manifest good-will. "To my Brother whom I love will I give my daughter to be his wife. May Shamash and Ishtar go before her, and may they cause her to satisfy the expectations of my Brother's heart." The princess thus commended to the care of the gods and of

The Amarna Age

the rather elderly bridegroom for whom she was destined, was Tadukhipa. Breasted has assumed ("History," p. 333; "Cambridge Ancient History," p. 95) that the young princess was destined to be the wife, not of Amenhotep III., but of his son; but Tushratta's own letters are quite clear as to the fact that she was married in the first instance to the older king. His sixth letter to Amenhotep (K. 23) mentions her expressly by name as the wife of Amenhotep—"With Tadukhipa, my daughter, thy wife, whom thou lovest, may it be well." Certainly the young widow was wedded, early in the new reign, by Akhenaten, but this was merely, as has been pointed out, a case of the new king taking over his predecessor's harem. The extraordinary jumbling up of matrimonial relationships involved was not at all out of the way according to the ideas of the time, either in Egypt or elsewhere. Indeed, Amenhotep seems to have had a predilection for wedding aunt and niece out of the same family, for from his very cross letter to Kadashman-Kharbe of Babylon we know that he was married to the sister of that potentate, and wished to add the Babylonian's daughter also to his list. "You wish, indeed," wrote Kadashman-Kharbe to the Pharaoh, and Amenhotep was very angry about it, "my daughter for your wife, while at the same time my sister, whom my father gave to you, is there with you, and no one has yet seen her, whether she is alive or dead." Plainly there were complications which perhaps made the palace not quite so comfortable as Tiy would have made it alone; and not all the eastern princesses whom Amenhotep collected were as gentle and accommodating as Gilukhipa.

Among all the king's wives, however, royal or other-



MARRIAGE AND HUNTING SCARABS OF AMENHOTEP III. (pp. 84, 86)

By kind permission of Sir Flinders Petrie

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

wise, Tiy remained supreme to the last. Her advice was evidently constantly sought by her husband in affairs of state, so much so that the fact was recognised abroad as well as at home. Tushratta, whose interest it might rather have been to support his sister and daughter against the lady who had relegated them to the position of ciphers in their Egyptian home, recognises the fact of Tiy's supremacy, seemingly with as little trace of a grudge as he would show towards a law of nature. "Whatever were all the words of your father, Nimmuria, which he wrote to me," writes the Mitannian to the young Pharaoh, "Tiy, the Great Wife of Nimmuria, the beloved, your mother, she knows all about them. Enquire of Tiy, your mother, with regard to all these things." The influence of the great queen was no doubt used to make life run as smoothly as possible for her easy-going, pleasure-loving husband. She had perhaps something of the passion for the new faith of the Aten which broke forth so irresistibly in her son; if so, she kept it within bounds during her husband's lifetime, knowing that he was not the man to sacrifice his peace for an idea.

To outward appearance all was going smoothly abroad and at home. Kadashman-Kharbe of Babylon, though he had his grievances against Amenhotep on account of the *hauteur* with which the Pharaoh had received his appeal for an Egyptian princess to be given to him in marriage, was too conscious of the solid value of Egyptian friendship, and too greedy for gold, to be other than most obsequious to his brother of Egypt. Tushratta of Mitanni was almost tremulously anxious to keep on good terms with his much-married brother and son-in-law; and though he was not always satisfied with the quantity

The Amarna Age

or the quality of the gold which he so shamelessly begged of his rich relation, he was always sufficiently hopeful of favours to come to be grateful for what he had already received. The King of Alashia (Cyprus, or the coast-land of Cilicia) sends large quantities of copper, and apologises for not sending more on the ground that his country had been visited with the plague. Such was the prestige of Egypt among the eastern sovereigns, that Burraburiash of Babylon, in his letter to Akhenaten (K. 9), mentions the fact that when "his father," Kurigalzu, was approached by some of the Kinakhkhi (Canaanite) chiefs with a request that he would ally himself with them against the Egyptian Pharaoh, the Babylonian king met his tempters with a stern refusal, though such a proposal must have been a sore temptation to an eastern king. "My father sent them the following answer," says Burraburiash: "Leave off trying to ally yourselves with me! When you attempt to raise up enmity against the King of Egypt, my brother, and to ally yourselves with another, I will have nothing to do with it. Shall I not rather come and plunder you? For he is in alliance with me." One wonders how much of Kurigalzu's disinterested friendship for Egypt was due to native Kassite sluggishness and disinclination to be put to trouble; but obviously he had a wholesome respect for Egyptian power.

At the same time, things were actually by no means so peaceful and satisfactory as they were made to appear to the Pharaoh. In the north the Hittites were beginning to become aggressive, and were threatening, not yet, indeed, Egyptian territory, but Egyptian allies. Tush-ratta, in his first letter to Amenhotep (K. 17), tells his

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

ally that the Hittites had invaded his land. "Teshub, my Lord, gave my enemy into my hand, and I routed him. There was none among them who returned to his own land." Erelong, Tushratta was to learn, what perhaps he already surmised, that his victory was by no means so final as his brave words suggest. Further south, Aki-izzi of Katna, with many protestations of the loyalty of his house, and himself to his overlord, warns Amenhotep that Aziru the Amorite, who was to be the evil genius of Syria in its relations to Egypt, was already beginning his practices on the loyal vassals of Egypt; while even here the long arm of the Hittite king is being thrust in to complicate the situation, so that Aki-izzi scarcely knows to whom his allegiance is due, as Amenhotep tells him that the Hittite is his ally. The one thing which is clear to the bewildered man is that unless the king sends troops, the whole land will fall away from him into the hands of his enemies. "O my Lord, if the trouble of this land lies upon the heart of my Lord, let my Lord send troops, and may they come." "If the King, my Lord, will not take the field himself, let him send troops, and let them come!" Poor Aki-izzi's protestations become almost tearful: "O my Lord, even as I love the King, my Lord, so also do the King of Nukhashshi, the King of Niy, the King of Sinzar, and the King of Tunanat; for these kings are all feudatories of my Lord."

Whether the appeals of Aki-izzi, and of the other vassals who were writing in a similar strain, ever came actually under the eye of Amenhotep himself or not, certainly they produced no effect. The early energy of the lion-hunting days had long departed, the king was

The Amarna Age

rapidly sinking into a premature old age, and though he may have sent troops to Syria, he never dreamed of repeating his one visit to his northern provinces. It was this absence of the personal touch and presence of the Pharaoh which was one of the main factors in shaking the loyalty of the Syrian vassals. On the whole it appears as if many of them were predisposed in favour of their Egyptian allegiance—naturally enough, as they had probably been educated in Thebes; but it was difficult for them to retain their devotion to the Good God whom they had never seen since the day when they left Thebes to take up their duties as royal feudatories in their native land. Even the solitary visit which Amenhotep had paid to Sidon, now long ago, had done something to keep alive the loyalty of the Syrians, and Ribaddi traces the decline of Egyptian influence to the fact that it had not been repeated. "Moreover," he writes to Akhenaten (K. 85), "since the time when your father returned from Sidon, since that time the lands have attached themselves to the Sa-Gaz." "Truly," he says again (K. 116), "thy father did not march out, nor did he inspect the provinces and his feudatories."

Akhenaten was to follow only too literally the bad example which his father had thus set him; but Amenhotep had probably a better excuse, from the physical point of view, than the younger man. Apparently the once vigorous stock of the XVIIIth Dynasty was wearing out. The next generation was to see the erratic tendencies which sometimes go along with considerable elements of genius in the last representatives of a dying line; in Amenhotep the decline was manifested in the form of premature decay. The great king was still well

The Culmination of Egyptian Glory

short of his fiftieth year ; but he had doubtless “warmed both hands before the fire of life,” with the consequences which usually follow on such indulgence of the relishing and enjoying faculties ; and now he had to put the conclusion to the verse—“It sinks, and I am ready to depart.” He had already prepared his tomb, not in the spot where the other princes of his house were lying, but in the Western Valley, where the great pyramidal hill which rises above his resting-place makes a worthy monument for the last of a great race of emperors ; and out on the plain his architects had completed the magnificent temple, with its twin colossi, its obelisks and flag-staves, which, as he tells us in his building inscription, “Satisfied the heart of His Majesty,” and of which he wrote, with a pathetic lack of prevision : “It is made very wide and large, and established for ever.” Now the time had come when tomb and temple were to receive the god for whom they were destined. His brother of Mitanni, loth to lose so comfortable an ally, and so accommodating a banker, and still master enough of Assyria to command the services of the great goddess of Nineveh, sent down the image of Ishtar that Amenhotep might worship her and be healed. “May Ishtar, Lady of heaven,” so ran his prayer, “protect my Brother and me ! A hundred thousand years and great joy may this lady give to us both.” But not even so liberal a prayer could stay the abhorred shears which were cutting short the thread of the great king’s life. Amenhotep had reigned for thirty-six years, and was probably on the verge of fifty, when he passed away, leaving a troubled heritage to a son whose very genius made him about the least fitted of all men to maintain it.

CHAPTER III

EGYPTIAN CULTURE IN THE XVIIITH DYNASTY

THE culmination of the material glories of the New Empire came in the reign of Amenhotep III. The whole situation of the nation curiously resembles that of France during the latter half of the reign of Louis XIV., just as the king himself resembles the magnificent Louis—without his energy and force of character. It is one of the times of pause, which now and again occur in history, when all the tendencies which have been uniting to produce a great result have accomplished their work, and the finished product stands for a brief space complete and splendid before the eyes of the world before the inevitable decline and decay lay all its glories in the dust.

“Nativity once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.”

Of the things that really make a nation great, the Egypt of Amenhotep's day was probably barren—probably, for no great emergency ever tested the question of the existence or absence of such qualities; but in all the material results of past greatness, in all the flash and glitter of the riches that have been bought, and the art that has been made possible by the stress and strain of the past and the energy and sacrifice of the great men of the past, she was supreme. The nation stood before the eyes of the other nations of the ancient east, the

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

incarnation of the pride of life, and equally, of course, the object of jealousy and the mark for intrigue. There is a vast amount of material splendour—so much was known to us, even before the revelations of the tomb of Tutankhamen taught us how gorgeous the equipment of a Pharaoh of the sadly shrunken and crippled Egypt of the decline could be, and how infinitely more splendid that of a great emperor like Amenhotep must have been; there is a considerable reality of power, if only there were a man to call it into exercise; there is a tremendous prestige, which a wiser man than Amenhotep might have known how to exploit; but all the same the time of flood has passed, and ere long the ebb will begin.

Egypt is still unquestionably first among the nations of the ancient world, and her Pharaoh is beyond a doubt the King of Kings. Theoretically, he is only the "brother" of the kings of Mitanni, Assyria, or Babylonia, and the most that their touchy jealousy would concede to him would be that he was first among his peers; but at least he is undeniably first, and the peers are very respectful, not to say servile, save when injured pride gets the better of prudence, and the King of Babylon or Mitanni subordinates his interest to his sense of self-importance, and tells Pharaoh for once the truth as it appears away from Thebes. One of the really priceless things in the Tell el-Amarna correspondence, apart altogether from its historical importance, is its revelation of the thoroughly essential humanity, often of the very vulgarest, which characterises the mightiest potentates of the ancient eastern world in their relations with one another. Kadashman-Kharbe, Tushratta, and the rest of them, were no doubt, in their own estima-

The Amarna Age

tion, quite as divine as their brother at Thebes ; but they were very common clay indeed when a question of profit was at stake, and they were probably the most shameless set of royal beggars that the world has ever seen.

One main factor in creating and sustaining the position which Egypt and its Pharaoh held among the lands and princes of the east was the command which the Pharaohs had of the great gold-producing region of Nubia. To the kings of the ancient east Egypt was what Lydia became later—the Land of Gold, and her Pharaoh was El Dorado. The continual refrain of the earlier Amarna letters, continued even into the time of Akhenaten, and the same whether it sounds from Babylon, Assyria, or Mitanni, is “Send me much gold, more gold ; for in my brother’s land gold is as common as dust.” One of the gems of political wisdom in the letters of Burra-buriash of Babylon to the young Akhenaten is the passage in which he sings the praises of the judicious exhibition of gold as the panacea for all troubles between kings (K. 11): “As for the neighbouring kings, consider this—If gold is there, then between kings there is brotherhood, good friendship, alliance, and happy relationships.” It was on this maxim that all the other kings acted in their dealings with Egypt—always under the condition, however, that the gold was to come from the Pharaoh, and by no means from them. “As to the gold,” writes Kadashman-Kharbe to Amenhotep, “concerning which I wrote to you, saying, ‘Send a great deal of gold to me before your (regular) messenger comes,’ now quickly, during this harvest, either in Tammuz or in Ab, send it, so that I may complete the work which I have begun. If, during this harvest, either in Tammuz or in Ab, you send the

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

gold concerning which I wrote to you, then I will give you my daughter. . . . So soon as I have finished the work which I have begun, to what purpose should I then desire gold? Verily, were you to send me three thousand talents of gold, I would not receive it, but would send it back to you again, and I would not give you my daughter to wife." Daughters, it appears, were more plentiful in Babylon than gold; but somehow one does not quite see Kadashman-Kharbe sending back those three thousand talents of gold, once he got his hands on them, no matter what the season might be. He would have sent down his whole family in exchange, sooner than return it. .

When it came to writing to Egypt, somehow all the kings suddenly remembered that they had a great work in hand at some temple or other which imperatively demanded "much gold," and one imagines that the Foreign Office scribes, for whose convenience the Government kept phrase-books to aid them in their translation of the correspondence, got to be fairly familiar with one set of sentences at all events. "Why did you send me only two minas of gold?" writes Burraburiash, indignantly, to Akhenaten. "Now my work upon the Temple, which I have undertaken, is exceeding great, therefore send a great deal of gold" (K. 9). Ashur-uballit of Assyria sings the same song, with the trifling variation that it is a palace, and not a temple that he is building (as you would expect of an Assyrian king). "I am building a new palace, which I am about to complete. Send me as much gold as is needed for its construction and equipment. At the time when Ashur-nadin-akhi, my father, sent to Egypt, twenty talents of gold were sent to him. Moreover, when the King of Hanigalbat sent to Egypt, to your

The Amarna Age

father, he sent to him twenty talents of gold. Surely I am as good as the King of Ḫanigalbat, and yet you have only sent me a little gold." Poor Burraburiash, who was so urgently in need of gold for better purposes, was most indignant when he heard that a mere king of Assyria had been suggesting that he should have a share in the golden stream which flowed from Egypt; and his letter, with its undercurrent of anxiety, shows how high the value of Egyptian friendship stood in the eyes of these kings, even in the time of Akhenaten. "As for the Assyrians, who are my dependents, I myself wrote to thee about them. Why have they come to thy land? If thou lovest me, they shall bring about no result; let them attain vanity only." ("With empty hands let them go home again.") Ashur-uballit with his scorn for "that Ḫanigalbatian king," Burraburiash with his "Assyrians my vassals," they are just a magnified edition of Scott's Highland chieftains wrangling for precedence and consideration in the presence of Montrose at Darnlinvarach.

On the whole, the most sturdy and shameless beggar of them all is Tushratta of Mitanni, as became his intimate relationship with the Egyptian throne. Strange to say, he has neither a temple nor a palace to build; he deserves at least the credit, such as it is, of plain downright begging, without any subterfuge, save his mention of munitions and of his sister's dowry. He is worth quoting for the mere persistence of his demands.

"Now when my brother sent gold, I also spoke thus—'Who cares whether it be too little or not?' It was not too little, it was abundant, and according to reckoning. And since it was according to the reckoning, I also rejoiced greatly over it, and whatever my brother has

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

sent, over it I rejoice greatly. Verily, now have I written to my brother, and may my brother increase his friendship to me more than to my father. Verily I have besought gold from my brother, and as for the gold which I request from my brother there are two reasons for the request—First, for your *karask* (munitions?), and second, for the dowry. So let my brother send to me gold in very great quantity, beyond reckoning, and let my brother send more gold than that which he sent to my father. For in my brother's land gold is as common as dust. May the gods so bring it about, that whereas now gold is so plentiful in the land of my brother, he may gain gold ten times more plentiful than at present. And as for the gold for which I have made request, let it not trouble my brother's heart, and let not my brother grieve my heart. So let my brother send to me gold, beyond reckoning, in very great quantity. And whatever my brother hankers after, let him send and receive it for his house, and I will bestow upon him tenfold whatever my brother desires. This land is the land of my brother, and this house is the house of my brother."

No doubt Pharaoh had his doubts as to the materialisation of all these fine Spanish promises, and understood perfectly that he was giving solid gold, and getting little in return ; but perhaps he judged the goodwill of the kings worth the price which he paid for it in his careless, openhanded fashion. Even that goodwill he did not get in overflowing measure in the end ; but one need scarcely wonder if Amenhotep, wooed and flattered thus on every hand, felt himself at last much too big a man to worry over mere details of government. Supine he certainly

The Amarna Age

was during the greater part of his reign ; but it would have taken Carlyle's Ram Das, "with fire in his belly," to have been anything else than supine in such an environment.

Of his complicated matrimonial relationships with the other great powers we have already seen something. We gain, perhaps, the clearest idea of the position which Egypt and its king held relatively to the nominally greatest of them from the letter which Kadashman-Kharbe sends to Amenhotep about a request which he had made for an Egyptian princess to be his wife, and which had been scornfully refused by the Egyptian king. "Verily, when you, my brother, have refused to give your daughter in marriage, and have written thus—'From of old a daughter of the King of Egypt has not been given to anybody,' I answered, 'Why do you say so? Thou art surely a king, and according to the desire of thine heart canst thou do. If thou givest her, who shall say anything against it?' When they reported to me these thy words, I wrote thus to my brother, . . . 'If there is any beautiful woman, send her! Who shall say, "She is not a king's daughter"? Why has not my brother sent me a wife?" continues the indignant Kassite. "If thou sendest none, shall not I, like thee, withhold from thee a wife?" The spectacle of the King of Babylon calmly suggesting that he will palm off any beautiful Egyptian plebeian on his confiding people as a princess of Egypt is distinctly amusing. Even his irritation, however, does not blind his eyes to the glitter of Egyptian gold, for it is this letter which concludes, as we have seen, with the urgent request for a speedy remittance, that he may complete the work which he has undertaken.

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

Of all the royal correspondents, the only one who writes in a manly and more or less independent tone is the King of Alashia. Whether his land is Cyprus or Cilicia is still matter of dispute ; but were it only for the straightforward and business-like way in which he approaches the Pharaoh, a pleasant contrast to the crawling of the other royal beggars, one would feel tempted to prefer Cyprus for his realm, the island isolation giving him so much of advantage over the continentals. If he asks for silver in very great quantity (a variant of the perpetual cry for gold), he at least sends quantities of copper in return ; while the rest of his requests, such as that for the restoration of the property of the Alashian who had died in Egypt, or for the exemption of his messengers from the attentions of the Egyptian customs officers, are plain, straightforward matters of business. But even Alashia has to show its anxiety lest its big friend should get entangled in alliances with such doubtful characters as the King of the Hittites or the King of Sankhar (Senzar ?). " With the King of Hatti and with the King of Sankhar, enter on no alliance " (K. 35). The anxiety itself sounds rather continental, and suggests Cilicia rather than Cyprus as the land of the writer ; but the point for our purpose is his eagerness to keep Egypt's friendship for himself, and his fear lest she should favour other powers. The whole Amarna correspondence, in its earlier days, speaks eloquently of an Egypt easily first among the great powers, courted and flattered by them all. Things were to change in this respect before many years had passed.

With a world thus at profound peace, on the surface at all events, and with a nation which occupied unquestion-

The Amarna Age

ably the foremost place among the peoples, Amenhotep saw his land the focus of the trade of the whole Near-Eastern and Ægean area. That trade was on a scale, and of an activity and variety of which it is only now that we are forming any conception. The old idea, which held sway so long, of the nations of the ancient world as isolated from one another behind barriers of race-hatred and jealousy and religious antipathy, and of the Egyptians in particular as a cloistered people, the Chinese or even the Tibetans of the ancient east, has gradually been forced to yield to the pressure of fact, and to give place to the picture of a world where international relationships were just as real and active as they are to-day, though perhaps somewhat slower in their methods of communication. There never was a time of isolation, such as the old theory required; and as to Egypt itself one can scarcely imagine anything more ludicrously unjust to the pioneers of ancient exploration and navigation. It was the decadent Egypt of the later dynasties, bound in iron fetters of tradition, which impressed the conception of a cloistered nation upon the Greek mind; the real living Egypt of earlier days was alive to her finger-tips to all that was of interest or profit in the lands around her. By 3000 B.C., Seneferu had his fleet of forty ships plying to Phœnicia, and returning with cargoes of cedar; three hundred years later, Sahura sent his fleet down the Red Sea to Somaliland, on the first of those expeditions to "The Divine Land" of which the later Egyptians were so fond; while the Pharaohs of the Vth and VIth Dynasties had their caravans regularly exploring the Soudan, under the leadership of their "Keepers of the Gate of the South." King Pepy's letter to Herkhuf,

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

with its boyish delight in the strange new toy, the pygmy whom the explorer had brought back from Equatorial Africa, is typical of the attitude of the whole nation, not only at that early stage, but again in the XVIIIth Dynasty, when the conquests of Thothmes III. had opened Naharina, the new land of romance, to his people. We have seen already the zeal with which Thothmes collected and brought back with him the strange plants and animals of his new provinces : that gives the attitude of mind with which the new and unusual was viewed. Barriers of race, religion, and interest there were ; but they were pierced continually, and in every direction, by the more powerful and urgent forces of material necessity and intellectual hunger.

Nor was the impulse confined to Egypt. We are to conceive of the whole area of the ancient east, both by sea and land, as crossed in every direction by trade-routes, as clearly marked out as those of to-day, and perhaps, having regard to the populations concerned, quite as busy, on which the galleys of Egypt, Phœnicia, and the Minoan Empire, and the caravans of Babylonia and Equatorial Africa, came and went, weaving together all the nations in one great fabric of international trade. Isaiah's vision of the white sails of the Mediterranean galleys, "flying as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows," was literal fact in these days of the empires. As early as 2600 B.C. Gudea of Lagash, in his description of the building of his great temple of Ningirsu, lets us see how widespread were the sources from which he drew his materials, and how safe must have been the trade-routes along which such costly things were brought without hindrance. Cedar from Mount Amanus, and box-

The Amarna Age

wood from Syria, diorite from the Sinai Peninsula, and gold and porphyry from Ethiopia, silver from the Taurus, and marble from Anti-Lebanon—if even a comparatively small city-state like Lagash could command such materials and secure their safe transport in 2600 B.C., we have to allow for a systematic flow of commerce in all the regions of the ancient east which would probably compare very favourably, both for quantity, quality, and safety of transit, with that of the present day in the same lands. We have no direct evidence of private trade between Egypt and other nations, for the letters which survive concern themselves, of course, with the affairs of kings and ministers of state alone; but it would be ridiculous to suppose that Pharaoh and his brother monarchs had any monopoly of the commerce which was enriching their lands, though it would appear from the letters of the King of Alashia that royalty claimed the privilege of exemption from the customs duties which were imposed upon the goods of other less exalted traders. “As for my merchants and my ship, let not your officer of the customs come too near them” (K. 39).

So far as concerns Egypt, we have evidence of the careful way in which all this stream of commerce was controlled and protected. Amenhotep, the son of Hapu, the famous Chief of Works of King Amenhotep III., afterwards deified for his wisdom in the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes II., tells us how, when he was merely “Superior King’s Scribe of the Recruits,” he organised the service of frontier-guards and customs officials. “I placed troops at the heads of the ways to turn back the foreigners in their places. The two regions were surrounded with a watch scouting for the Sand-rangers.

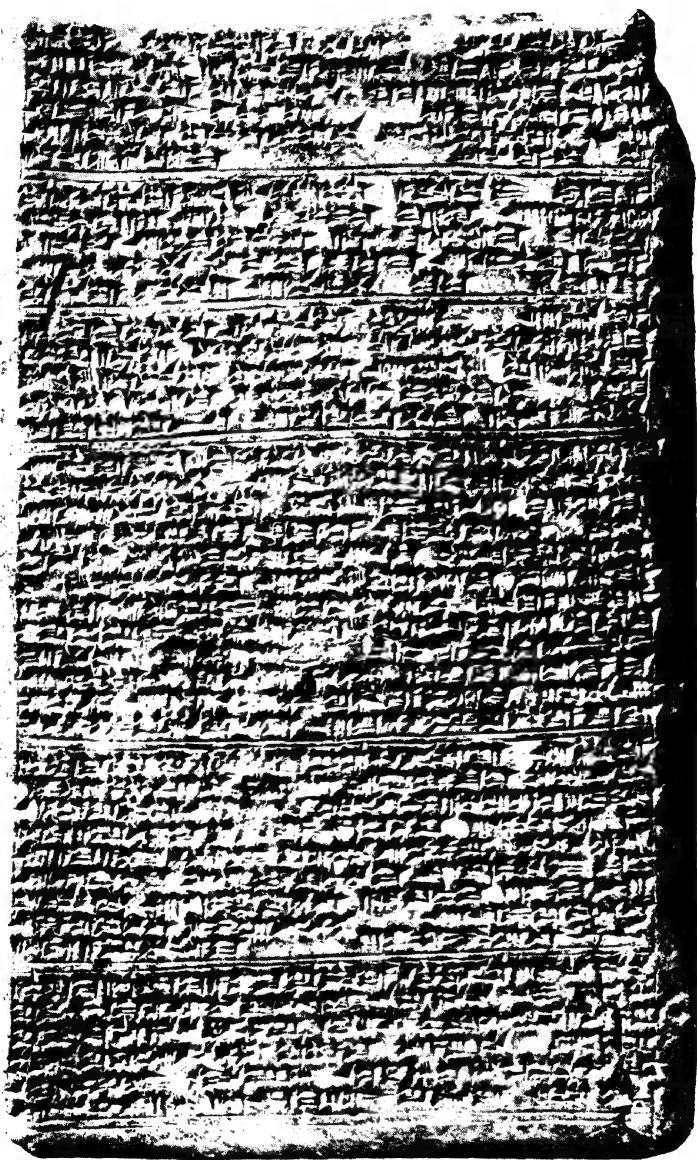


Photo W. F. Mansell.

LETTER OF TUSHRATTA OF MITANNI TO AMENHOTEP III.

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

I did likewise at the heads of the river-mouths, which were closed under my troops, except to the troops of the royal marine. I was the guide of their ways, they depended upon my command." Thus, under Amen-hotep's direction, the entrance of aliens across the Isthmus of Suez, and on the western frontier, was carefully regulated, while the trade-routes across the eastern desert were patrolled by armed guards to ensure the safety of the caravans against the raids of the nomads; while the troops at the river-mouths were to enforce the levying of the customs to which the King of Alashia refers, and to control the traffic, and drive off the pirates of the Ægean.

Thus fostered and shepherded, trade flourished. The scale of it we do not know, and never shall; but in 1100 B.C. or so, when Wenamon made his memorable journey to Byblos, and when trade had for at least two centuries been exposed to all the dangers resulting from the collapse of the great empires, and the breakdown of their systems of policing the trade-routes by land and sea, Zakar-Baal of Byblos remarks to the Egyptian envoy: "There are certainly twenty ships here in my harbour, which are in connection with Nesubanebbedd (the ruler of Lower Egypt); and at this Sidon, whither thou also wouldst go, there are indeed 10,000 ships which also are in connection with Berket-el (probably a Phœnician merchant resident in Tanis), and which sail to his house." Zakar-Baal, of course, is drawing a prodigious long-bow in his account of the number of the ships of Berket-el; but even the quite reasonable number which he assigns to the trading-fleet of Nesubanebbedd is proof sufficient of the magnitude of the shipping trade between Tanis and Byblos, in spite of the unfavourable conditions

The Amarna Age

of the times. His production of the ledgers of his house, going back for several generations, shows that the organisation of business was thoroughly understood; while the amount of the transactions recorded—a matter of over £70,000 worth of cedar, according to Mr. Weigall's estimate—shows that the scale of the trade must have been considerable. And Byblos was only one of the ports which were pouring their goods into the Nile mouths, and receiving back the fabrics of the Egyptian weavers, and the matchless work of the Egyptian goldsmiths, cabinet-makers, and artists in faience, with the corn, for which all lands, in the time of dearth, looked to Egypt. The five hundred talents of copper which the King of Alashia sends on one occasion, apologising for the smallness of the quantity on account of the plague which has been raging in his country (K. 35), gives some indication, though only a slight one, of the scale of the trade. Crete, Alashia (whether it be Cyprus or the Cilician coastland), and Phœnicia maintain the oversea trade, with the Egyptian merchant fleet bearing its full share; the land-traffic passes through the bottle-neck of the Isthmus of Suez, where the long caravans from Syria, Mesopotamia, and Babylonia converged with their rich freights. A regular messenger service, or postal service, is kept up, at least between the kings of the different states, and there exists in Egypt a special class of scribe, the "Maher," who is trained for the duty of travelling on royal business in foreign countries. From the south, also, the caravans come in by road, and the galleys by river, with all the rich natural products and raw material of the Soudan, and are duly dealt with by the royal representative on the southern frontier.

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

Altogether we are to conceive of the world of the ancient east towards the end of the XVIIIth Dynasty as a world singularly alert and responsive to every influence, whether material, intellectual, or spiritual, which might emanate from any member of the community of nations. The luxuries of one nation speedily became the common property of all ; the artistic conceptions of one race were transmitted to its neighbours, judged, and either rejected or accepted with the modifications which brought them more into accordance with local tastes and needs ; each people developed its own national culture, with its own racial characteristics ; but while that was the case, no culture lived and died to itself, but all were influenced and tinged by the surrounding cultures whose impact upon them was so constant and so intimate. In fact, the characteristic feature of the age might almost be described as Internationalism, if Cosmopolitanism be too large a word to use in connection with what, after all, was so limited an area. The citizen of Egypt, of Crete, or of Babylonia, had an outlook very much wider than his own narrow valley, island, or alluvial plain afforded ; he was also a member of a great and intricately interlocked community of nations—nations, moreover, which were intensely alive, and were taking their full share in the creation of all that we know and prize to-day as culture.

All this movement of commerce by sea and land was not unaccompanied with risks. There were "land-thieves and water-thieves" then, as there have been in all ages ; and sometimes, even in the palmy days of Amenhotep, there were indications that they were giving trouble. The King of Alashia makes mention in one of his letters (K. 38) of Lycian pirates who

The Amarna Age

were plundering some of his towns, and who apparently had been doing similar damage in Egypt or to Egyptian traders. One of the first indications of the coming troubles which were to destroy all the peace of the time is the notice which Ashur-uballit gives to Amenhotep (K. 16) that his messengers have been held up because of danger from bands of marauding Suti, or Bedouin; and when king's messengers were not safe, we may imagine that common traders fared none too well. In his first letter to Akhenaten, Burraburiash has to make complaint that his messenger has been robbed even in lands which are vassals of Egypt. "With regard to Salmu my messenger whom I sent to you, his caravan has been twice plundered. Once has Biriamaza plundered it, and his other caravan, Pamahu, governor of one of the lands which belong to you, a feudatory land, has plundered it." In his next letter things are even worse (K. 8). "After Akhutab went his way to my brother, in the town of Khinatuni in Kinakhkhi, Sumadda, son of Balumme, and Sutatna, son of Saratum, of Accho, sent their people, and my merchants have they slain, and their money have they taken. . . . Kinakhkhi is your land, and its kings are your servants. In your land have I been outraged. Control them, and restore the money which they have stolen! And, as for the people who have slain my servants, slay them, and avenge their blood!" A little force judiciously applied at the start of this lawlessness might have changed the whole history of Canaan; but Akhenaten was not the man to apply it. The petty kinglets of Canaan were evidently dreaded as a standing threat to peaceful trade and intercourse, and it is to them that the first safe-conduct that we know of in history is

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

addressed. It comes from an unnamed king of North Syria, who was at all events of sufficient importance to be able to send his messenger to condole with the Pharaoh, perhaps on his father's death. "Unto the kings of Kinakhkhi, the vassals of my brother, the king hath spoken, saying, 'Verily I have sent Akia my messenger unto my brother, the King of Egypt, to condole with him. Let no one detain him! Swiftly cause him to enter into Egypt, and take him hastily unto the hand of the viceroy of Egypt, and let no evil be done to him'" (K. 30). The growth of lawlessness, of which these passages allow us to catch a glimpse, is the first indication that the halcyon days of the Egyptian peace were passing away.

Meanwhile, however, and at all events within the borders of the land of Egypt itself during all the earlier part of the reign of Amenhotep, there was an amount of wealth and luxury, and a development of the arts and the artistic crafts which minister to the cultivated and luxurious tastes of a prosperous and cultured people, such as the world had never seen before, and has not often seen since. The culture of Egypt reaches its full bloom in three successive stages, which are separated from each other by those gaps in the history which are known as the First and Second Intermediate Dark Periods. The first stage is that of the Old Kingdom, culminating perhaps about the time of the Pyramid-builders, but lasting down to the close of the VIth Dynasty. To those, and they are many, who share the feeling which makes Browning say,

"But at any rate I have loved the season
Of Art's spring-birth so dim and dewy,"

the art of the Old Kingdom will probably always seem

The Amarna Age

the finest flower of the Egyptian genius. There is about its finest works, such as some of the Saqqāra tomb-reliefs, a freshness and a straightforwardness and simplicity which are only found in an art which has not yet lost the dew of its youth; while with these qualities there goes also something of the almost savage force and fire which marked the latest products of the pre-historic art, and which are still to be found in the wild fancies of the Pyramid Texts. The art which produced the great diorite Khafra, the Menkaura with the figures of the nomes, the Sheikh el-Beled, the Lords Ti and Ranefer on the one hand, and the astonishing combination of vigour and delicacy in the tomb-reliefs of Ti, Kagemni, Ptahhetep, Mereruka, and a score of others, needs no other witness to its greatness than its own work. Nor was it only in stone that the plastic artist of the Old Kingdom excelled. His metal-work already held the prophecy of all the triumphs of later ages—witness the golden hawk of Hierakonpolis, and the copper statues of King Pepy I. and Prince Mer-en-Ra.

The Old Kingdom decays and passes away, and after the First Intermediate Period comes the second flowering in the brilliant art of the XIIth Dynasty, perhaps more various and more ambitious, but lacking a little of the freshness and unwearied energy of the first bloom. The superb grey granite figures of Senusert III. from Der el-Bahri, in the British and Cairo Museums, the various heads of Amenemhat III., and particularly those likenesses of him which have so long gone by the name of the Hyksos Sphinxes, have almost all the force of the best work of the Old Kingdom; but they convey also the impression of the weariness as well as the pride

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

of power. The metal-worker has fully come into his kingdom, and the old maker of the hawk of Hierakonpolis would have greeted as masters in his craft the men who wrought the exquisite diadems of Princess Khnumit, the perfect simplicity and dignity of the queen's crown of Lahun, or the pectorals of Princess Sat-hathor-ant; while if these wonders were ever equalled in any succeeding age—a doubtful question—they were at least never surpassed.

The second winter is the dark period of the Hyksos usurpation, and then, after the War of Independence, comes the third flowering of the Egyptian genius, marked by a breadth and variety in which it exceeds its predecessors, but characterised also by the lack of the strength and living energy of either of them. It would be doing injustice to the best work of the XVIIIth Dynasty, or even of the XIXth, to say that it lacks energy. There are specimens of XVIIIth Dynasty sculpture, such as the splendid schist Thothmes III. of the Cairo Museum, which are worthy to rank alongside the very best of the older work; but, speaking generally, what one is conscious of in Empire art is a greater softness and delicacy, combined with a certain tendency, not invariably, but often present, to a languid and slightly morbid over-refinement and accentuation of delicacy. You feel that you can begin to talk about daintiness in the paintings of the tomb-chapels of Nakht and Zeserkaraseb; the lovely reliefs of the chapels of Khaemhat and Userhet have lost the superabundant vigour of the Old and Middle Kingdom work, and in spite of their unquestionable beauty suggest a race which was beginning to grow tired. The tendency is scarcely arrested by the revival of realism in the remark-

The Amarna Age

able outburst of Akhenaten's time, and grows more pronounced with the XIXth Dynasty. Egyptian art has few more exquisite things to show than Seti's relief of Osiris on his throne, with the double figure of Maat before him, and Isis, Renpet, and Nephthys behind him ; but the languid grace of all the figures suggests that they are still, not because they are divine, but because they are too weary to move. So much is this the case, that Maspero has actually formulated the theory that in the famous granite statues of Tutankhamen and of the god Khonsu at the Cairo Museum, there are evident traces of a tendency to consumption in the originals—a theory which on the same evidence would apply quite as forcibly to the black granite Ramses II. of Turin. This, of course, is imagination pushed to an extreme ; but it forcibly underlines the characteristics of the art.

The reason for the whole tendency in the direction of greater delicacy and a more languid grace is surely to be found, not in any actual sickliness of the stock, but in the gradual modification which had now been going on for several generations in the type of the Egyptian race—a modification which in itself is another result of the prevailing internationalism of the time. The older Egyptian stock, as represented in art, is characterised, not by any delicacy and suavity of form or face, but rather by a certain harshness and raw-boned vigour, which suggests considerable physical strength ; the type of the later XVIIIth Dynasty is quite different from this. "The striking change," says Sir Flinders Petrie, "in the physiognomy and ideal type of the upper classes in the latter part of the XVIIIth Dynasty points to a strong foreign infusion. In place of the bold, active faces of

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

earlier times, there is a peculiar sweetness and delicacy ; a gentle smile and a small, gracefully curved nose are characteristic of the upper classes in the time of Amenhotep III." Whence did this change in type come ?

Manifestly, as Petrie suggests, from the infusion of foreign blood ; and this, in its turn, was the result of the conquests of the earlier reigns of the dynasty. The Egyptian, so far as we know, never adopted the method of dealing with a conquered people which was favoured by the Assyrian, and which Charles Reade has called "decanting" them. The Assyrian moved a whole tribe in a solid block into a new land, filling its place with another solid tribe. There was thus a change of location, but no mixture of race. The Egyptian dealt with his conquered peoples in a manner which produced a far subtler change upon the purity of his own stock. From the very earliest of the Syrian campaigns down to the latest we have constant records of great batches of captives being carried down into Egypt with the returning army. In eleven campaigns of Thothmes III., of which we have details, there were at least 8,000 captives brought into Egypt, and of these 400 or so are specifically stated to have been of noble class. Large numbers of these captives were women ; and we may be sure that the officers of the army, whose services, like those of the two Aahmes and Amenemhab, were rewarded by the gift of their captives for slaves, did not pick the plainest women, but rather the most graceful and attractive. The elder Aahmes, during his career, obtained the gift of at least twenty-one slaves, while his younger namesake, besides telling us of several such gifts, slumps his final batch of captives. "There were brought

The Amarna Age

off for me in Shasu very many living prisoners; I did not count them." One may picture the Egyptian officers acting on the principle which Sisera's mother ascribes to her son, "to every man a damsel or two"; and even though the twenty-one of Aahmes or the thirty-one of Amenemhab may be exceptional, still the officer-class of the nation must have been fairly well provided with slaves, of whom the best favoured would, according to ancient custom, become the wives or concubines of their captors. The effect on the succeeding generations of the upper classes is manifest, and as nearly all the slaves thus taken into their masters' households would be of Syrian or Mitannian blood, the natural and inevitable consequence would be that change of type which is so manifest, and, in fact, a gradual approximation to a composite Egypto-Syrian or Egypto-Mitannian type.

On the throne the same change was taking place under different conditions. Not by capture, but by negotiation, Mitannian and Babylonian princesses were being brought down into Egypt to become the wives of Pharaohs and the mothers of their successors, until the purity of the ancient solar stock was a thing of the past. "From of old," wrote Amenhotep to Kadashman-Kharbe, "a daughter of the King of Egypt has not been given to anyone"; but the rule did not hold in the opposite way during the XVIIIth Dynasty, and the later princes of the line were of descent as mixed as that of their nobles and officers.

Along with the influx of new blood came that of new ideas, artistic and intellectual. The culture of Syria at the time of its conquest by the Pharaohs was on a level very different from the degradation to which it sank

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

in the troubled times which followed, and which we find reflected later still, and in Palestine, in the aimless bloodshed and confusion of the period of the Judges. So far as material splendour and luxury went, it is probable that the Syrians were quite the equals of the Egyptians who defeated them. Every little kinglet in the Syrian League which Thothmes scattered at Megiddo had his gold-plated chariot, and his bronze corselet, inlaid with gold. When one reads, in the records of the ninth campaign, of the tribute of Retenu, "Thirty-one chariots wrought with silver and gold, and painted; various silver vessels of the workmanship of the country; vessels of every costly stone; numerous vessels of copper," and in that of the thirteenth, of "Nine chariots wrought with silver and gold; sixty-one painted chariots; vessels of all the work of Phœnicia; tables of ivory and of carob wood," it is evident that Egypt cannot but have been profoundly influenced by all the new types of craftsmanship which were being brought into the land. What the artistic quality of the inspiration, apart from the richness of the material involved, may have been, is another matter.

Syrian art, and especially that variety of it which is the product of Phœnicia, has always been characterised more by richness of material than by fineness of design. Indeed, the constant hankering of the Semite in art has been for a crude gorgeousness, a superabundance of meaningless detail, a persistent use of motives of ornament in the wrong places—in short, for all that makes thoroughly bad design. Judging from the representations which Thothmes has given us of the vessels of precious metal which he received from Syria, these were

The Amarna Age

exactly the characteristics of Syrian art in the time of the XVIIIth Dynasty. Animal forms used where they have no meaning, and for purposes for which they have no fitness, superb material, and fine workmanship, coupled with clumsiness of form—such were the types of art which the Egyptians were learning to appreciate in place of their own dignified and satisfying designs. Along with the bad designs came the skilful but uninspired craftsmen who were responsible for them. Just as Nebuchadrezzar, in the time of Jehoiachin of Judah, carried away from Jerusalem “all the craftsmen and smiths” to Babylon, so the Egyptians would naturally select as their representative captives from Syria the most skilful workmen whom they could find. In point of fact, Egypt had nothing to learn from Syria in mere craftsmanship, any more than in design; but the Syrian workmen cannot have been without their influence upon their brothers of the trades in Egypt, especially when Syrian things were the fashion. It is more than probable that we can trace the result in the gradual debasement of Egyptian art, so far as concerns the designs for such artistic work as the old Egyptian goldsmiths and jewelers delighted in. The technique of the craft remains almost as good as ever; but it can scarcely be merely a coincidence that just from the time when the thoroughly bad influence of the art of Semitic Syria and Phœnicia begins to make its impact upon the fine traditions of the Egyptian craftsmen, his design steadily deteriorates, until at last he becomes capable of producing such overloaded monstrosities as the hideous gold earrings of Ramses XII., which were found at Abydos, and now adorn the Cairo Museum.

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

Only in one point does the Egyptian art of the empire maintain its ancient traditions with more or less complete success against the disintegrating influences which conquests and the fusion of races were bringing to bear upon it. Sculpture in the round was all through Egyptian history the citadel of the national art, and that for a very obvious reason. In all the other parts of his work the artist could afford to amuse himself, so to speak, with the fancies and innovations which might be suggested to him by contact with other races ; but in his sculpture in the round this was denied to him by the very conditions under which he worked. He was first and last a portrait artist, and a portrait artist working under very stringent conditions. Upon the life-likeness of his work there might come to depend, in the final issue, his patron's hope of immortality. Despite all the arts of the mummifier, there would come a time when the actual frame of the man as he was in the days of his flesh would finally crumble into dust, and then the portrait statue would remain the last refuge of the soul or the *ka*, which would still find in it a recognisable likeness of their fleshly tabernacle. Thus carefully studied life-likeness was not only an ideal of art to the Egyptian sculptor ; it was something much more important, according to the ideas of his time—it was a theological necessity. The result was the most vigorous and sincere school of portrait sculpture which the ancient world ever knew. Until we come to the Roman school of portraiture, there is nothing to compare for a single moment with the magnificent series of portrait heads which has come down to us from the art of ancient Egypt. From the rude vigour of the Khasekhemui, and the serene dignity of the

The Amarna Age

Khafra, down through the masterful energy of the schist Thothmes III. and the grace of the Turin Ramses II., till we reach at last the uncompromising ugliness of the capable faces of Amenhotep, the son of Hapu, and Prince Mentuemhat, and the intimate searching out of character in the unknown priest of the Berlin Museum, the Egyptian sculptor remains unapproachable in his rendering of his human subjects, until the Roman goes a step further still, in his insight into character and rendering of it. The Assyrian sculptor dealt in his reliefs with problems of motion which the Egyptians scarcely ever dared to attempt, and he solved them in general, though not always, with triumphant success ; but when it comes to portraiture, he is a child compared to his Egyptian brother. Assyrian kings, as their sculpture pictures them, could almost be cast in a mould by the batch. Each portrait statue of a Pharaoh has its own individuality.

The art of the later XVIIIth Dynasty undoubtedly shows the evident traces of foreign influence even in its portraiture ; it could not do otherwise if the sculptor was to be true to the facts presented to him. Accordingly, we are faced with a type of portrait which is marked by a greater suavity in the forms and a greater tendency to the suggestion of gentleness, combined with a technique which seeks more after superficial finish. Strength is there still, but it tends to be veiled somewhat by the greater attention which is given to grace and finish of rendering. Yet Egyptian art has few finer things to show us than the keen profile of the Thothmes III., or the ugly strength of the Amenhotep, son of Hapu, the delicate grace of the Brussels relief of Queen Tiy, and the reliefs of the chapel of Khaemhat.

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

Painting was now more widely used than ever, and some of the tomb paintings of Thebes from this period rank high among Egyptian work, and in their attempts at naturalism seem to be groping after something of the realistic style which is characteristic of the Amarna school of painting. Of this branch of art the work in the tombs of Nakht and Zeserkaraseb, already alluded to, and the paintings of festivity and sport from an unknown tomb, now in the British Museum, are excellent specimens.

As one would have expected in a period of overflowing wealth and luxury, the small art of the period is exceedingly abundant, rich, and fine, alike in design and execution. The Egyptian craftsman was thoroughly at home in work like that which produced the dainty toilet vessels for ointment and other things, and some of his exercises of this type belong to the very highest class of the objects in which art seems to be playing itself, so to speak. The toilet-table of a great Theban lady of the empire, with its silver mirrors mounted in gold and obsidian, its combs and ointment vessels of ebony and ivory, wrought into graceful and dainty designs, its wonderful jewellery and goldsmith work, in which the precious metals were combined with the rich colours of precious and semi-precious stones, with a taste which had not yet lost its sureness and reserve, must have been as elaborate as and much more tasteful than that of a great lady of the Regency. As to the houses in which this splendour was lodged, modern ideas would probably pronounce them slight and inadequate; but the Egyptian built for his own climate and his own conception of what is fitting, not for ours, and if the materials of his dwelling were of the flimsiest, mud-brick stuccoed, with wood

The Amarna Age

framing, they were calculated in such a climate to last his time, and they were decorated with a taste and certainty which few races have shown in such matters. Egyptian taste in decoration may not correspond to our own, but it always knows what it is about, and there is no fumbling after imperfectly understood effects in it.

Of the furniture which filled these pleasant houses, from Pharaoh's palace downwards, we have fortunately many examples extant. Much was known of the quality of Egyptian design and execution in this respect, even before the more modern discoveries; but the tomb of Iuaa and Tuiu, the father and mother of Queen Tiy, first showed us really conclusive examples of the combined richness and artistic quality of the furniture of a great noble of the time of Amenhotep III., and while the wealth of the tomb of Tutankhamen belongs to a period a few years later, it is essentially the same in style; indeed, some of it may well date from the days of Amenhotep, as Petrie has suggested. It may safely be said that there never was a time when the craftsman more happily united a good and satisfactorily business-like type of design, with beauty of material and excellence of workmanship, than now. Professor Petrie's judgment on his work is high, but not too high: "The powerful technical skill of Egyptian art, its good sense of limitations, and its true feeling for harmony and expression, will always make it of the first importance to the countries of the West with which it was so early and so long connected."

We have seen how much the personal appearance of the Egyptian of the upper classes had been modified within a century and a half by the constant infusion of foreign elements into the population of the land. Such

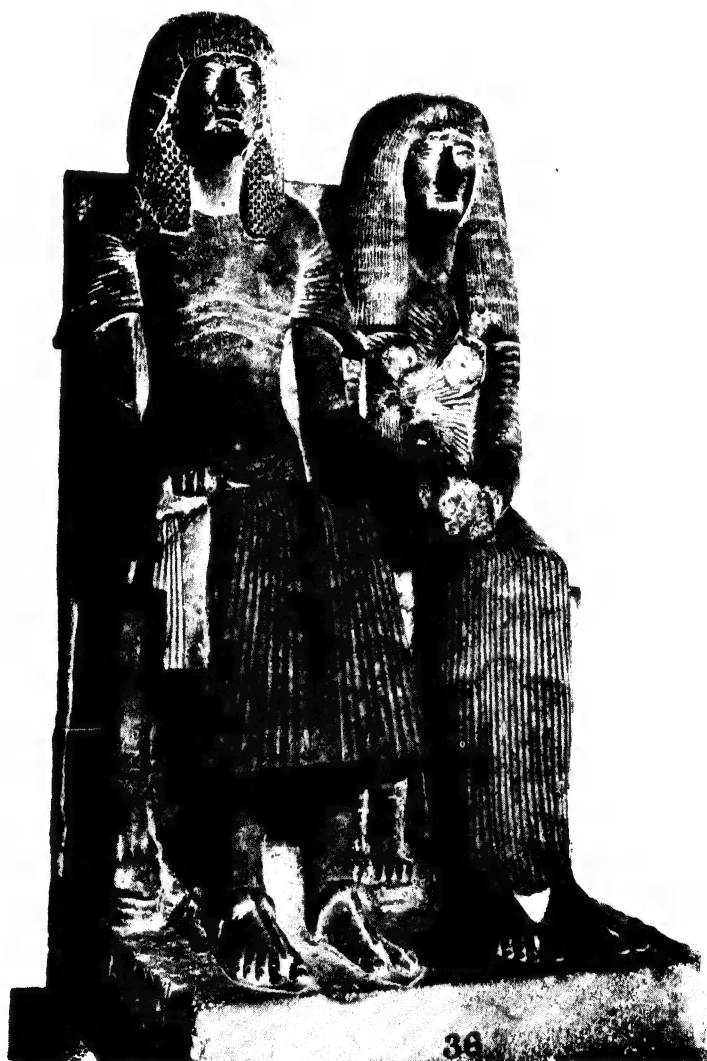


Photo W. F. Mansell

XVIII DYNASTY TYPES : AN OFFICIAL AND HIS WIFE (*pp.* 120-122)

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

as he was, he had also departed very considerably from the customs of his ancestors in respect of the garb which was worn by him and by his womankind. On the whole, through all his long history, the Egyptian, with an admirable taste for the fitting and the cleanly, maintained his constancy to white linen as his only wear, and encouraged his wife and daughters to do the same, in a manner which would have won the emphatic approval of Dr. Johnson ; nor was this praiseworthy custom superseded even by the luxury of the XVIIIth Dynasty, or the wholesale importation of alien customs and foreign fabrics. The heavier woollen fabrics of the Semite he always regarded as barbarous, and while he could and did use bright coloured fabrics woven with consummate skill in beautiful conventional patterns, as decorations for the walls of his house, he rejected such things for his own wear. The Pharaoh, or the princes of the royal house, being divine themselves, could use colour in their robes on great ceremonial occasions, as the gods, their kindred, did ; but even Pharaoh on ordinary occasions was true to the national white linen, and in all other ranks it was universal. The fashion of the dress had, however, become much more elaborate. In place of the simple, pleated linen loin-cloth of the Old Kingdom, or the rather shroud-like robe of the Middle Kingdom, hanging from a band beneath the arms, we now meet with an elaborate arrangement of linen cape hanging over the shoulders, combined with a long underdress, coming down almost to the ankles, both cape and robe being elaborately accordion-pleated or gauffred. The dress of the woman was of much the same character, and was pleated in the same way, the pleats being impressed on the fine

The Amarna Age

linen by means of a sort of gauffring board, of which specimens have survived. Judging from the representations of the garb which we possess, it must have been one in which it was practically impossible to do anything, except look dignified ; but certainly there has never been invented a style of dress more admirably adapted to that restful type of occupation. The headdress which went along with the rest of the stately get-up was a heavy curled wig, which hung down to the shoulders. The women, and possibly some of the men also, wore beneath the wig their own hair ; and, if we may trust the tomb-paintings, some of the Theban ladies did not disdain the use of hair-dyes to get the golden or auburn colour in their locks which the ladies of Venice so much admired, for beneath the black wig can be seen "permanently waved" locks of a colour which is frankly red. The old custom of going barefoot, which gives to Egyptian figures, both of men and women, such a generous and sensible size of foot, is now superseded by the wearing of sandals, with toes as magnificently curled up at the tips as those of a dandy of the court of Edward III. or Richard II.

When the Egyptian grandee went abroad over distances which required a conveyance, or on ceremonial occasions when his dignity demanded that he should not walk, he made use of the chariot which his deadly enemies the Hyksos had introduced into Egypt. The skill of the Egyptian chariot-builder had lightened the chariot very considerably, as compared with the practice of the more northerly nations, and the ordinary Egyptian car was of very light construction indeed, though strongly and well put together. It was very small, affording scant standing-room for the driver and one passenger ; though

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

a child might be taken along with the other occupants, as we see continually in the pictures of Akhenaten and his household. The chariot was drawn by a pair of horses, who were attached to it by means of a light yoke, fastened to a pole. The light and narrow car was preserved from the danger of being upset at every corner by the breadth of its wheel-base, which was considerable. Springs, of course, were unknown, but the jolting may have been somewhat mitigated by the fact that the floor of the chariot consisted of interlaced strips of leather, which would give, more or less, to the weight of the riders, and the inequalities of the road. The tyres of the wheels were of leather, padded, and painted red; and, save for their colour, they must have looked very like the "cushion" tyres which were the intermediate stage between solid rubber and modern pneumatics. Mechanically the design of the chariot was bad; the car was not balanced, but the weight was in front of the axle, thus loading the backs of the horses unnecessarily. Such a turn-out was, no doubt, admirably fitted for the work it had to do in Egypt; but it must have been somewhat inadequate for the rougher work which the roads of Syria sometimes put upon it, and the satirical account of the Travels of a Maher, in the Anastasi Papyrus, speaks more than once of the risks of driving under these conditions: "Thy chariot is overturned, thy horse breaks its harness."

Undoubtedly the feature of Egyptian culture under the dynasty which has left the most impressive evidence of its quality is its sacred architecture. The Thebes of the time of Amenhotep III. must have been one of the most stately cities of the ancient world, as well as one of the greatest. It may be that the Babylon of Nebuchad-

The Amarna Age

rezzar's time was larger, and certainly its fortifications were on a huger scale than anything of which we have evidence in Egypt, while its Procession Street must have been a piece of thoroughly Semitic gorgeousness to which probably there was no parallel in the great Egyptian city ; but in the combination of ordered dignity and sumptuousness Thebes must have feared no rival. In the impression which the capital made in this respect, the chief elements must have been the temples of the gods, and especially the two gigantic shrines of Karnak and Luxor, on the eastern bank, and the splendid pair of terrace-temples at Der el-Bahri, and the great funerary temple of Amenhotep on the western side of the river.

In order to frame in our minds any approach to a true conception of the appearance and magnificence of these great buildings which were the solemn crown of the glory of Thebes, we have to make an effort towards the double process of thinking away a great deal which now exists upon the sites, and thinking back into their places the vanished glories of colour and adornment in the precious metals. At Karnak, of course, this means that the great western pylon of the Ptolemies, the Court of the Bubastites, the Pylon of Ramses II., and the gigantic Hypostyle Hall vanish, leaving the great Pylon of Amenhotep III., which now forms the back of the Hypostyle Hall, as the western façade of the temple. At Luxor, also, there is loss, not all to be deplored ; and if we should miss the Pylon of Ramses, with its twin obelisks, and its six colossal statues, we should miss also what we could well spare, in the shape of the clumsy forecourt of the same king with its bloated and nerveless columns ; while in the place of these would rise unobscured the graceful

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

little chapel of Thothmes III., which at present is buried among the coarser work of Ramses, and behind it the stately columns of the great unfinished nave of Amen-hotep's Hypostyle. The temples, thus modified, would be approached by long avenues of ram- or jackal-headed sphinxes, whose ordered lines would give an element of dignity to the approach that is hard to realise from the battered wrecks of the lines which survive. On the whole, the change, while it involves the loss of some undoubtedly impressive features, and also of a good deal of mere bulk, would probably be to the advantage of both buildings, as it certainly would be to our conception of Egyptian sacred architecture.

If, however, we lose in such a survey much that is familiar, we gain on the other hand infinitely more, from the fact that we can begin to realise that Egyptian temple architecture was not the sombre and sullen affair, depending for its effect on mere mass of solid stone, that we have often been in the habit of imagining. Nothing could be further away from the reality than such a conception. Just as in thinking back the Parthenon in the days of its glory we have to think in colour, as the Greek did, and substitute softly glowing backgrounds of crimson or blue for the chilly whiteness which has been our traditional conception of Greek art, so at Thebes we have to carry the process a stage further, and to imagine Karnak, Luxor, and all the great assemblage of divine abodes which glorified the great city, as shining resplendent with all the colours of the Egyptian artist's palette. To talk of them, as is often done, as "sober-coloured temples," is to miss the mark completely. To-day an Egyptian temple seems to us almost the most

The Amarna Age

solemn and austere thing which man has ever created—impressive, indeed, but solely by reason of its bulk and a certain simplicity of proportion, remote from all frivolities of adornment, and separated by vast ages and distances from all modern architectural ideas. In its pride, it was very different, and much more human. Always it must have awed by reason of its stupendous proportions; but there was none of the austerity and disdain of decorative devices that we associate with it. The whole building, without and within, was like a great mediæval cathedral—one huge picture-book, on whose tremendous pages the faithful might read the stories of the triumphs of their divine Pharaohs, and the legends of the great gods to whose company Pharaoh would in due course be joined. All the reliefs which now depend for their effect simply on the beauty of line and the varying play of shadow were then gaily coloured in natural tints, while each figure in the long lines of the inscriptions had all its details picked out in coloured paste. The worshipper approaching the temple along the long avenue of sphinxes was confronted, not by the blank walls of the huge pylon, as at present, but by a gorgeous portal between two towers, whose whole surface was one gigantic illumination in which the great deeds of the Pharaoh were represented. In front of these towers stood or sat colossal statues of the royal builder, two, four, or six, as the taste or the resources of the king dictated; while in front of these again rose two slender shafts of red granite from Aswan, carved from base to pyramidion with the story of the greatness and the piety of the monarch who erected them. Against the gay front of the pylon, on either side of the gateway, rose a group of tall flagstaves, steadied

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

by great timber holdfasts which pierced the wall of the tower behind, and bearing high above the cornice the banners of the king and the god.

The great gate which closes the space between the towers is of cedar of Lebanon, overlaid with Asiatic bronze, damascened with gold, and bearing as the central motive of its decoration "the Divine Shadow"—an emblem of the god, which in the Theban temples dedicated to Amen seems to have been the figure of a ram. Passing the gate, if he were one of the favoured few who had the entry to the inner courts, he would find himself in an open courtyard, surrounded by a colonnade of papyrus-bud columns. On one side of this court stands a tall stele, adorned with gold, and encrusted with precious stones, marking the place where the Pharaoh, nominally the supreme High-priest of every god in his kingdom, takes his stand on the great occasions when he actually officiates in the temple ritual. In front of him rises the façade of another great hall, whose roof is supported by a forest of columns. Passing through its portal, he finds himself in a great dimly-lit chamber. Down its centre-line runs a double row of columns of the open flower-type. They are considerably higher than the rows of bud columns on either side of them; and thus the hall is divided into a central nave, and two side aisles, as in the Roman basilica type and the Christian cathedral. The greater height of the roof of the nave has enabled the architect to provide a system of lighting by means of a series of small windows above the level of the roofs of the aisles. These are grated with stone, and the whole arrangement is the earliest anticipation of the cathedral clerestory. Here also, so far as the dim light

The Amarna Age

enables the detail to be seen, the walls of the hall are covered with gaily-coloured reliefs—only within the sacred building secular details, such as battle and hunting scenes, find no place, and the reliefs depict the king offering to the gods. Similar scenes are repeated on the great columns of the nave and side aisles. The floor of the chamber is adorned with silver—how, the extant records do not tell us. One can scarcely imagine that, even with all the wealth of Nubia and the other provinces flowing into his treasury, Pharaoh would be able to afford the immense outlay involved in actually overlaying the floor of a huge hall with silver, at a time when silver had only begun to fall behind gold in value; but the less precious metal was certainly used in profusion in some fashion on the floor, so that in Thebes, as in the Jerusalem of Solomon's time, silver was "as stones."

Beyond this great hall (the Hypostyle Hall) came the Holy of Holies—a small chamber or group of chambers, always dark, save when the officiating priest entered with his lamp to perform the daily services, and surrounded with store-chambers in which the cult objects and vessels were laid up. Such, in type, was a Theban temple of the days of the empire—if not one of the most beautiful, at least one of the most impressive and the most splendid buildings which man has ever created. Comparatively few of the temples, however, corresponded, save very roughly, to this type; for here came in the great fault of the Egyptian in point of architectural taste. From the first to the last of his long career as a builder, he seldom conceived of a building from the beginning as a complete entity, but rather dealt with it piecemeal, as caprice or opportunity suggested. One can no more

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

dream of adding to or taking from a great Greek temple than of altering a perfect sonnet. In either case the one perfect expression has been given for all time to a certain aspect of thought and taste. But an Egyptian temple is often conceived and executed just as a child builds with his box of bricks. There is no obvious reason why the building should stop, save that the box is empty ; and no obvious reason why it should not be resumed again when another supply of blocks is forthcoming. This is the great fault which prevents the Egyptian from ever ranking along with the Greek and the Gothic architects, who conceive of their building from the beginning as a finished whole, and in its development make all things subserve the one end. He is a great master-builder, though by no means a faultless one, but scarcely in the same sense a great architect. Karnak, and in a less degree Luxor, can hardly be called temples ; they are rather aggregates of sacred structures, great and imposing, but answering to no complete ideal, and living, so far as they live, rather on the plane of the lower organisms, to which the loss or the addition of a member is a comparatively secondary matter. Yet, withal, there can be no doubt that the great temples of Thebes in the days of its imperial magnificence must have been almost overwhelming in the impression they conveyed to the mind.

Probably the noblest of them all, because it was from start to finish the expression of the will and the desire of a single man, was the funerary temple which Amenhotep III. reared to the glory of Amen and for the due observance of his own mortuary services, on the western plain of Thebes. Not one stone of it is left upon another ; and this, not because of the ravages of time or

The Amarna Age

war, but because of the deliberate vandalism of Ramses II. and his son Merenptah. The sole surviving witnesses to its greatness are the twin colossi which sit in battered majesty, with hands on knees, looking eternally across the great river to the sunrise and the vanished glories of Thebes. But Amenhotep, when his holy and beautiful house was finished, set up in its court a noble stele of black granite engraved with the record of all the now departed glories of the work. Merenptah stole it, with the rest of the material for his own temple, and carved his own rougher inscription on its back; and now while on the one side it tells us of the triumphs of the later king and his destruction of the seed of the children of Israel, on the other it still bears witness to the splendour of the great king and his piety towards the gods.

“Behold,” says this unique record of a great Egyptian temple, “the heart of His Majesty was satisfied with making a very great monument; never has happened the like since the beginning. He made it as his monument for his father Amen, Lord of Thebes, making for him an august temple on the west of Thebes, an eternal everlasting fortress of fine white sandstone, wrought with gold throughout; its floor is adorned with silver, all its portals with electrum; it is made very wide and large, and established for ever, and adorned with this very great monument (the stele which bears the description). It is numerous in royal statues, of Elephantine granite, of costly gritstone, of every splendid costly stone, established as everlasting works. Their stature shrines more than the heavens; their rays are in the faces of men like the sun, when he shines early in the morning. It is supplied with a ‘Station of the King’ (the great stele

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

marking the royal position as high priest), wrought with gold and every costly stone. Flagstaves are set up before it, wrought with electrum ; it resembles the horizon in heaven when Ra rises therein. Its lake is filled with the great Nile, lord of the fish and fowl. . . . Its storehouse is filled with male and female slaves, with children of the princes of all the countries of the captivity of His Majesty. Its storehouses contain all good things, whose number is not known. It is surrounded with settlements of Syrians, colonised with children of princes." . . . One could have wished that instead of vague comparisons with the heavens, His Majesty had condescended on a few more details, which would have made his picture more real to the mind ; but even as it is we may be thankful for the impression of the utmost that the greatest empire of the ancient world could do for its god and its king in the height of its power and wealth.

Especially interesting is the reference to the colony of Syrians which was planted beside the temple—another witness to the way in which Egyptian society was being permeated by new influences, and by the infusion of new blood. With such colonies settled in some of the most sacred spots of the capital, and doubtless in other towns as well, it was impossible that Egyptian thought as to other peoples and their relation to the gods should not have undergone a process of gradual modification. The fruit of this, and of other similar influences, was soon to be seen.

One can scarcely imagine anything more splendid than the pomp which attended the worship of a great god, such as Amen, in the great days of the empire. The Nile furnished an ideal setting, with its broad and placid stream, for the gorgeous water-festivals in which the Egyptian

The Amarna Age

took such delight, and the river was utilised to the utmost as the pathway for the great processions of royal and noble worshippers as they followed the barge of the god to the quay where his image was disembarked, after its processional voyage, for reinstatement in its shrine. Amenhotep has fortunately left us a description of the barge which was built in his day: "I made another monument for him who begat me, Amen-Ra, Lord of Thebes, who established me upon his throne, making for him a great barge for 'The Beginning-of-the-River,' named *Amen-Ra-in-the-Sacred-Barge* of new cedar which His Majesty cut in the countries of God's Land. It was dragged over the mountains of Retenu by the princes of all countries. It was made very wide and large, there is no instance of doing the like. Its —— is adorned with silver, wrought with gold throughout; the great shrine is of electrum, so that it fills the land with its brightness; its bows, they repeat the brightness; they bear great crowns, whose serpents twine along the two sides; they exercise protection behind them. Flagstaves are set up before it, wrought with electrum, two great obelisks are between them; it is beautiful everywhere."

The corresponding description given by Ramses IV. of the new barge with which Ramses III. replaced the old one gives us an interesting detail of the size of these great ceremonial galleys. "I made for thee," so Ramses III. is represented in the Great Harris Papyrus as saying, "thy august ship *Userhet* of 130 cubits length upon the river." In other words, the sacred barge measured about 224 feet in length—a fact which ought to increase considerably our respect for the skill of the Egyptian shipwrights. Nelson's *Victory* measures

BOOKS ABOUT *the* EAST



Specimen Illustration from "*THE AMARNA AGE*," by the Rev. JAMES BAIKIE.

See page 3.

Published by

A. & C. BLACK, LTD., 4, 5 & 6, Soho Square, London, W. 1

BLACK'S POPULAR SERIES OF COLOUR BOOKS

Each containing 32 full-page illustrations in colour

Large Crown 8vo, Cloth, with attractive picture jacket.

Each 7/6 net

(By post 8/-)

DALMATIA, (26 illustrations), by Walter Tyndale, R.I., and Horatio F. Brown, LL.D.
EGYPT, by R. Talbot Kelly, R.I., R.B.A., F.R.G.S.
GREECE, by John Fulleylove, R.I., and the Right Rev. J. A. McClymont, C.B.E., D.D.
HOLY LAND, by John Fulleylove, R.I., and Rev. John Kelman, M.A., D.D.
INDIA, by Mortimer Menpes, R.I., R.E., and Flora Annie Steel.
JAPAN, by Ella du Cane and others, and Rev. Walter Weston.
KASHMIR, by Major P. Molyneux, D.S.O., and Sir Francis E. Younghusband, K.C.S.I.

PEEPS AT MANY LANDS

Each volume containing full-page illustrations in colour, and a sketch map.
 Price 2/6 net each (by post, 2/10 each).

BRITISH NORTH BORNEO	*INDIA	SIAM
BURMA	INDIA, HOME LIFE	TURKEY
CEYLON	*JAPAN	Ancient Lands
*CHINA	JAVA	ASSYRIA, ANCIENT
DELHI	KASHMIR	CRETE, ANCIENT
*EGYPT	KOREA	EGYPT, ANCIENT
GREECE	MALAY STATES	GREECE, ANCIENT
HOLY LAND	PERSIA	PALESTINE, ANCIENT

*Also to be had in French, together with L'INDO-CHINE and LE MAROC

PEEPS AT HISTORY

Each volume containing 8 full-page illustrations in colour, and numerous thumbnail sketches in the text.

INDIA

JAPAN

PEEPS AT MANY LANDS

LARGER SERIES (Size 8½ × 5½ inches) in the same style as the 2/6 Series, but independently written and illustrated. Each volume containing 32 full-page plates in colour.
 Price 6/- net each.

THE FAR EAST
 (China, Japan, and Korea)

THE GORGEOUS EAST
 (India, Burma, Ceylon, and Siam)

GUIDE BOOKS

CAIRO OF TO-DAY, by E. A. Reynolds-Ball. Seventh Edition.
CONSTANTINOPLE, by Demetrius Coupoupoulos. Fourth Edition.
JERUSALEM, by E. A. Reynolds-Ball. Third Edition.

Price 5/- net.
 Price 5/- net.
 Price 5/- net.

BLACK'S BEAUTIFUL POSTCARDS

of British design and manufacture.

In colour.

Price 6d. net per packet of six cards.

Series 10 and 11.
 Series 12 and 13.
 Series 21, 22 and 23.
 Series 24.
 Series 27.
 Series 33, 34 and 35.

BANKS OF THE NILE. Two packets of six cards each.
PEOPLE OF EGYPT. Two packets of six cards each.
OUR INDIAN ARMIES. Three packets of six cards each.
THE PEOPLE OF INDIA. One packet of six cards.
RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM. One packet of six cards.
JAPAN. Three packets of six cards each.

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

186 feet in length on her gun-deck, and a little over 151 feet on her keel; while the *Queen*, the first line-of-battle ship launched in Queen Victoria's reign, measured 204 feet 3 inches. Thus the barge of Amen in 1200 B.C. was 38 feet longer than the ship which was the pride of the British Navy in A.D. 1805, and 20 feet longer than the biggest battleship which we built in the days before the coming of steam. Her other dimensions, of course, must have been very much less than in the case of the battleships mentioned, which were of 2,162 and 4,476 tons burden respectively; but even so the Egyptian ship-builders of the empire must have been past-masters of their craft when they ventured to construct repeatedly vessels of such a size as these barges, even for river traffic. With this mighty vessel leading the procession, and the royal galley and the barges of the priests and nobles following in a gay-coloured, flag-bedecked line, the water festivals of Amen at Thebes must have presented a spectacle as far surpassing that of the Venetian *Bridal of the Adriatic* as the barge *Userhet-Amen* surpassed the *Bucentaur* in size. (The measurements of the *Bucentaur* were 100 feet in length by 21 in breadth.)

What may have been the attitude of the Egyptian people generally towards the state religion, whose ceremonial furnished them with such brilliant spectacles, is another matter. The great god of the empire, with his stupendous temples, his gilded barges, his crowds of wealthy priests, and his colonies of Syrian servants, was a very different being from the god of the city of the early days, living in his humble shrine in the midst of his own people, near to them all, and revered and sought by them all. He was now removed, by his very

The Amarna Age

splendour, to a vast distance from his humbler worshippers ; and the man of the people, who looked on from a distance at the glittering pomp of the processional worship of Amen, must have felt, when the great gates of the temple closed behind the last bright figure of the favoured worshippers, and left him without, that the state religion had nothing to say to himself. "So great and lofty was the god," says Erman, "that the humble man could not venture to trouble him with the daily needs of body and soul ; he was placed high above the people, like the king, to whom honour was accorded, as ruler and governor of all things, but who could not be confided in by the individual." This sense of aloofness on the part of the great gods from their ordinary worshippers must have been indefinitely increased by the standing fiction that the Pharaoh was the only real priest and worshipper, and that all offerings, by whomsoever presented (for the royal priest had to have his deputies), were in reality "offerings which the king gives." Accordingly it is in the period of the empire, and increasingly in its later stages, that we find growing up a popular religion which takes no account of the great official gods, the gods of the court and the hierarchy, but reserves its devotion for little vulgar deities such as Bes and Taurt, who in the official faith had no higher rank than that of assistants and attendants of the great gods, and who on that very account came nearer to the hearts of the common people, who also were vulgar, and had no more standing in the great world of the empire than their common little gods had in the celestial kingdom. With the worship of these quaint little nightmare figures went that of even stranger divinities, a return to tree and animal worship, and, for some obscure

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

reason, the adoration of King Amenhotep I., the first monarch of the conquering XVIIIth Dynasty after Aahmes, and of his mother Aahmes Nefertari. It is in the later empire, after the catastrophe of Atenism, that this tendency finds its fullest development, along with an increasing sense of personal accountability; and a sense of sin rare in Egyptian religion; but its beginnings are in this period, and arise out of the very conditions which had increased so enormously the power and wealth of the great gods, and especially of Amen, the god of the empire-builders.

It would, no doubt, be a mistake to conclude that the religious revolution which now cut across all the ancient traditions of the Egyptian faith was a natural growth out of these conditions, and an attempt on the part of its originators to meet that sense of the need of a nearer and more human type of religion which was undoubtedly growing up in the hearts of the common people. One would fain imagine it to have been so; but, unfortunately, all the evidence is in the opposite direction. Atenism was, from start to finish, almost exclusively a court religion, and by no means one of those faiths which take their rise, like Christianity, among the lower strata of society, and grow till they conquer all. Its history was exactly the opposite; it began on the throne, or on the steps of the throne, found its mouthpiece in a king, and never, so far as can be judged, succeeded in gaining any grasp of the affections and interests of the great mass of the nation at all—otherwise it would never have withered as it did when its royal prop was withdrawn. Courtiers found it to their interest to be “obedient to the teaching of the Pharaoh”; but one may doubt if

The Amarna Age

Akhenaten ever considered the question of the relation of the common people to his new faith at all, still more if he was led to its promulgation by any consideration of the spiritual needs of the nation. "The Aton-faith," as Breasted has said, "remained but the cherished theory of the idealist Ikhnaton, and a little court-circle; it never really became the religion of the people."

At the same time, it would be a mistake on the other side, quite as great, to ignore the fact that this reality of the growing gulf between the official faith of the empire and the lives and affections of the common people was in actual practice the most important part of the preparation for the overthrow of the ancient faith before the new belief, and the secret of the easy triumph of the Aten doctrines. If the faith of Amen had actually held a position of dominance over the thought and affection of the people, it would have been impossible for any Pharaoh, great as were the powers of the head of the state, to overthrow it with the ease with which Akhenaten apparently accomplished the downfall of Amenism. We have no record of the struggles, if there were any, which preceded the establishment of the new religion; they may have been bitter enough, but they have left no trace. The fact remains that, with no evidence of any convulsion in the nation, Akhenaten mastered the opposition of those devoted to Amen worship, established his new creed as the official religion of the land, and that during his life there was not, so far as our sources of information go, a single overt movement in opposition to the royal will. The great god of the empire fell without a struggle that has left a mark on the history of the time; and there was not, apparently, a single man in Egypt who loved Amenism



EGYPTIAN GALLEY OF THE EMPIRE (*pp.* 140, 141)

Egyptian Culture in the XVIIIth Dynasty

enough, or had sufficient faith in the love of the people for it, to stake anything on the chances of a revolution in favour of the great god. The people saw Amen go and the Aten come with the same indifference with which, a few years later, they saw the Aten vanish and the old god return. It is this aspect of the relation of the Egyptian people as a whole to the faith which officially was that of the nation which is perhaps of most lasting importance to ourselves. This was the first occasion in history on which we meet with a religion which had been so materially successful as to alienate from itself entirely the heart of the nation over whose spiritual destinies it presided, and to make it a matter of indifference to the great mass of the people whether it maintained its position or fell before the attack of another faith, to which they were equally indifferent; it is not likely to be the last. One of the great lessons of the unconscious preparation of the mind of the Egypt of the empire for the temporary triumph of Atenism is just this—that it is fatally possible for a state religion to be far too prosperous, too well-off in material things, and in this prosperity to draw itself away from touch with the unprosperous people who make the great majority of mankind, and for whom religion is a vital necessity. It is in this alienation of the common people that the decay of the great historic religions of the past has always begun; and Amenism, despite its momentary triumph over its younger rival, was no exception to the rule. Amen, in defeating Atenism, won but a Pyrrhic victory; the triumph of a reactionary minority—a mere priestly caste—meant in the end the death of Amenism also.

CHAPTER IV

THE SURROUNDING NATIONS : THE MINOANS

WE have already seen, in our survey of the causes which brought it about that Egypt encountered so little opposition in her bid for empire, the leading characteristics of the group of nations which shared with her the dominant positions in the world of the ancient east ; it remains now to look at these individual nations in a more detailed manner, to consider briefly their position, the things which mark their type, their achievement, up to the point of time at which we meet them, and the contribution which they have made to the culture of the world.

Of the five great powers which shared with Egypt the dominion of the eastern world, the power which comes least into the picture, and is least plunged in the welter of international politics, is the Minoan. To say this is not to imply that the Minoan Empire counted for less, either in the actual distribution of power among the nations, or in the final summing-up of our debt to each state for its gift to the general store of the world's knowledge, art, and culture in general ; but only that, for our present purpose, and with our present sources of information, we have less to go upon with regard to the Minoans in respect of their influence upon the affairs of the time with which we are dealing than with regard to the other powers. It may very well be that in the end we shall find that to the Minoans we owe a debt almost greater than to any other of the elder nations of the ancient east,

The Surrounding Nations

because of the contribution which they gave, even in their downfall, to the genius and artistic spirit of the race which finally superseded them, and which yet in its victory was itself conquered, and then inspired, by the wonderful artistic faculty of the people whom it had conquered. There can surely be little doubt that it was the fusion with the sterner genius of the incoming Northerners of the softer, quicker, and more beauty-loving genius of the Minoans which produced that unique thing which we know as Greek Culture, the foundation of all that we prize and love in European knowledge and art. The Northerner gave to the union the balance, the restraint, the austerity and purity of taste which so remarkably characterise Greek culture, and have taught us to accept their motto, "Nothing in excess," as the typical feature of the Greek genius. The Minoan himself had little or nothing of that element in his nature, as witness the freedom and lack of restraint of his decorative work at Knossos and elsewhere—a freedom which often borders on lawlessness, and on what we should now call bad taste; but he brought, on the other hand, an irrepressible love of beauty for its own sake, and a swiftness of eye and sureness of hand in the representation and interpretation of beauty, which have rarely been approached by any race. When the two races met and fused, the result was the people which laid down for all time the laws of thought and art. Higher praise could scarcely be given to the Minoans than to say that in this noble partnership they brought their fair share to the common treasure.

Such considerations, however, though we cannot ignore them in our short survey of the Minoan race and culture, scarcely affect the position as regards the influence of the

The Amarna Age

race upon the historic situation with which we have to deal at the period of the Amarna crisis. So far as that goes, we have to do only with the facts as they are recorded for us in the chronicles of the nations concerned ; and while it is possible, though scarcely probable, that if we could read the Minoan script, and the thousands of inscribed tablets which still await their Champollion, we might have to change our opinion as to the influence of the island-state on the politics of the time, the fact remains that from the sources, as we have them, it is impossible to say that the situation was modified one hair's-breadth by anything that Crete did or could have done. Indeed it must have been before the close of the reign of Amenhotep III., and quite probably before his reign was half-way through, that the tragedy of Knossos took place, and the power of the House of Minos fell, never to rise again ; but even before the great catastrophe, and while we still have the evidence that Crete was at the height of her glory, and in regular intercourse with Egypt, and presumably with the other eastern powers as well, there is no evidence that she exercised, or aspired to exercise, any direct influence upon the course of continental affairs, or to sway the balance of power one way or the other. One imagines, rather, that the island-state may have been satisfied with what we might call the "splendid isolation" of her position, and have had little desire to be entangled in the web of continental diplomacy. She had her interests, as she had had them for two millenniums, more or less, in Egypt, and possibly in other lands also, being a great trading nation ; but beyond that there is no evidence that she ever went. When, if ever, such evidence comes to light, it will be time enough to restate

The Surrounding Nations

the position ; meanwhile Crete plays the smallest part on the stage which is being cleared for the drama of the Decline and Fall of the Egyptian Empire, and it is therefore, perhaps, better to deal with her first, before the more important *dramatis personæ* come upon the scene.

One of the most interesting features of Egyptian tomb-painting is the occurrence, especially in the tombs of the highest officials of state, of representations of men of the different lands with which Egypt was brought into contact. Such representations occur more or less at all stages of the national history, and the foreigners are generally pictured as bringing offerings, which, whatever their actual character, were no doubt duly listed by the royal scribes as "tribute." The tombs of the XVIIIth Dynasty nobles are particularly rich in such material ; and of these, the two most famous, and also the most historically interesting, are those of Senmut and Rekhmara, both of them on the slope of the hill of Sheikh Abd el-Qurneh. Senmut was the great man of Queen Hatshepsut's reign, the architect of the great queen, and along with Aahmes Pen-nekheb, the tutor of her daughter, the Princess Neferu-ra. To his genius we owe the setting up of the two obelisks of Hatshepsut, of which one still stands at Karnak ; while his supreme work is the great terrace-temple at Der el-Bahri. Appropriately enough, the great builder's tomb is placed at the top of the hill, so that if his spirit still haunts the scene of his life-work, he can look down and see his masterpiece, the most beautiful of Egyptian temples, lying beneath in its great bay of the Libyan cliffs, and be comforted by the thought that it is now better seen, better cared for, and more appreciated than it has been for more than two thousand years.

The Amarna Age

Rekhmara was the great man of the next reign, that of Thothmes III., and was vizier of Egypt in succession to his own uncle during the latter half of the reign of the great conqueror. His tomb has been described by Breasted as "the most important private monument of the empire"; a description which is deserved, not only because of the priceless value of the information which is given us by its inscriptions with regard to the constitution of the Egyptian state, and the administration of justice therein, but also because of the almost equally important detail of its pictured scenes.

Both of the tombs contain examples of what may almost be called the standard decoration of an important official tomb of the empire. The idea of this type of adornment is that processions of representative inhabitants of all the four quarters of the world come to bring tribute to Pharaoh. In addition to Pharaoh's own Egyptians, there are Northerners, Southerners, Easterners, and Westerners; and just as this is the standard type of decoration, so also is there a standard type of representative in each case. The Northerner is always represented by a Semite, presumably a Syrian, the Southerner by an Ethiopian, the Easterner by an inhabitant of Punt, and the Westerner by specimens of the race which the Egyptians called the people of Keftiu. In the pictures of the tombs of Senmut and Rekhmara a particular interest attaches to the representations of these Westerners, because of the detail which they give of a costume and appearance and a type of art which have been gradually becoming familiar within the last twenty-five years from the excavations of Sir Arthur Evans and others at Knossos, Phaistos, and others sites in Crete. In

The Surrounding Nations

Rekhmara's tomb the Westerners are called "Princes of Keftiu," and "Men of the Isles"; and their general get-up is very striking and quite unmistakable. They wear nothing but a gaily-coloured waist-cloth, which is tightly girt in by a broad belt with raised edges and an ornamented surface, the ornament in some cases being apparently a spiral. Their foot-gear is very different from the Egyptian sandal, consisting sometimes of boots coming half-way up the calf, and sometimes of a kind of sandal, above which the leg is wrapped in what we should call puttees. Most striking of all is the manner in which their hair is dressed. Instead of the close crop, or the full wig of the Egyptian, we have long locks elaborately curled up almost into the form of a coxcomb on the top of the head, while the rest of the hair streams down to below the shoulders. The vessels which these envoys bear on their shoulders and in their hands are as characteristic as their get-up. Some of them are shaped for all the world like the famous Vaphio Cups on a gigantic scale; some of them are great urns like the stone vessel which Evans found in the sculptor's workshop at Knossos; and some are obviously variants of the familiar wine-strainer which the Cupbearer of the great fresco at Knossos bears before him.

The question is, Who are these Princes of Keftiu and Men of the Isles? The word Keftiu occurs in the Egyptian language as early as the XIIth Dynasty, when it is found, under the form "Kefatiu," in the papyrus which contains the "Admonitions of Ipuwer." It may possibly mean "The Hinder-lands," so that the men of Keftiu would, so to speak, be the "Men from the Back of Beyond"; but this is not certain, though it may

The Amarna Age

be picturesque. On the discovery of the Cupbearer at Knossos, followed by that of so many other representations of Minoan figures, and of so much of their actual vessels and utensils, the new material was at once compared with the well-known Egyptian frescoes, and there seemed to be little doubt that the painters of Knossos and of Thebes were really representing the same types, such differences as occurred being only those due to the difference of national idiom in draughtsmanship and the use of colour. Accordingly it has been assumed that in the Keftiu we have the Egyptian vision of the men of the empire of the Cretan sea-kings, of whose intercourse with Egypt we have so much other evidence.

Within the last few years, however, Mr. G. A. Wainwright has maintained that the identification is not justified, that the Keftiu meant, to the Egyptian, men of Cilicia, particularly of Eastern Cilicia, and that they are to be entirely dissociated from the Men of the Isles. Mr. Wainwright's position, of course, is entirely in line with the growing conviction of the fact that Cilicia played a much larger part in the development of the history and culture of the ancient east than we have been in the habit of believing; and from the point of insistence on this fact, his scepticism with regard to the identity of Keftiu and Minoan is all to the good. The brilliance of Sir Arthur Evans's discoveries should not blind us to the fact that the island-empire need not have been the only power, or the only source of light and culture, in the Eastern Mediterranean.

At the same time, one cannot help feeling that the attempt to stress slight differences in the get-up of the tribute bearers, and divide them into two parties, of whom

The Surrounding Nations

the "Men of the Isles" are genuine Minoans, and the Keftiu are not Minoans at all, is somewhat a refinement beyond the evidence of the actual figures. Sir Thomas Lawrence is said to have remarked, somewhat quaintly, of Raeburn's famous portrait of the Macnab, that it was "the likest thing to a human being that was ever painted." Similarly one feels that the ordinary observer, who comes with no prepossessions to the comparison of the Keftiu of the tomb of Rekhmara with the Cupbearer of Knossos and other pictures of Minoans, will be inclined to say that if the Keftiu are not Minoans, then they are the likest things to Minoans that were ever painted. No doubt there are variations in the dress ; but, as Dr. H. R. Hall has pointed out, "variations in Minoan kilts prove nothing ; no doubt there were plenty such variations." There are far greater variations in the dress of any modern party of Britons ; but despite these a close observer would have little difficulty in deciding the nationality of the party. It is the style that rules, not the variations within the style. The Keftiu wear a dress which, in spite of its variations, is distinctly of Minoan type ; they dress their hair, just like the Men of the Isles, in the unique fashion of the Minoans ; the leader of the procession in the tomb of Rekhmara is described as "The Great Chief of the Kefti and the Isles of the Green Sea," which seems a strange way of distinguishing between two types ; finally, the vases which they carry, of gold, silver, and bronze, are "typically Minoan in form, and typically 'Late Minoan' at that." On the whole, it seems that the case for Cilician Keftiu, as distinct from the Minoan "Men of the Isles," is not sufficiently strong to compel us to discard an identification which on all other grounds

The Amarna Age

is a perfectly natural one ; and we may still believe that in the processions of the tombs of the two great Egyptian ministers of state we see the representatives of the first great sea-power of history, bearing as gifts to Pharaoh the splendid products of an art in which the Cretans were supreme. From a sentimental point of view, it would be a pity if we had to dismiss them as mere Cilicians ; for these are the last pictures of them that Egyptian art is to give us. Less than a century after the time when the Egyptian artists painted their figures on the wall of the tomb of Rekhmara, the glories of the Great Palace Period of the House of Minos (Late Minoan II.) passed away forever in the sack and burning of Knossos.

It may well be, however, that Mr. Wainwright's contention for the recognition of Cilicia as another of the homes of the culture that we have learned to call Minoan is perfectly justified. We know that Minoan influence was widespread, as one would have expected in the case of a state whose power depended upon the sea ; we know that intercourse between Crete and the shores of Asia Minor was a thing of long-standing, as the Phaistos Disk proves ; there seems to be no valid reason for denying that the culture which established its offshoots in the islands of the Ægean, and gave to mainland Greece the first elements of the great Mycenæan culture, which Mycenæ was possibly to repay by the destruction of its mother city, should also have found a lodgement and a vigorous growth on the Cilician coastland. Nothing is more likely than that in Western Cilicia there may have existed a type of culture, essentially the same as that of Crete, because its origin was the same, but modified by the different conditions of the

The Surrounding Nations

continent, and the influences of an environment of other civilised nations which the Cretan, in his island home, lacked. Further, it is not unlikely, as Mr. Wace has pointed out, that the Cretans, in addition to using the direct oversea route to the Nile mouths as their trade-route to Egypt, may have developed the longer but easier and safer route by way of the south-western and southern coasts of Asia Minor and by Cyprus, which would gradually result in the spread of Minoan culture over all the line of the trade-route. "Thus the people of Keftiu might be any folk dwelling between Cilicia and Crete, and the appearance of Minoan objects among the presents of the princes of the Keftiu and of the islands in the midst of the sea would not be surprising, if the Cretans used the longer coasting-route by way of Asia Minor and Cyprus to Egypt besides adventuring directly across the Libyan Sea."

Whatever may be the eventual finding with regard to this interesting point of detail, it should be kept in mind that after all it is a point of detail and nothing more, and that it does not affect the main question of the undeniably close connection which endured between the island-empire and Egypt for at least two thousand years. The evidence for the intercourse between the two states is amply sufficient to demonstrate the intimacy of the bond which bound them together. Indeed, Professor Newberry has pointed out the possibility of a connection between Crete and Egypt, in respect of certain religious representations, which would make the link a very ancient and fundamental one, pointing, it may even be surmised, to community of origin between the two races. Thus, in the ancient cults of the Delta there occur the bull, the double-

The Amarna Age

axe, and the horns of consecration, with all of which the Cretan excavations have made us familiar ; while other resemblances have also been pointed out by Dr. Hall, and anyone who sees the scene of the funeral rites on the Hagia Triada sarcophagus cannot fail to see the resemblance, amounting almost to identity, between its details and some of those of the familiar Egyptian scene of the ceremony of "opening the mouth" of the mummy. Such resemblances, occurring, as they do, in the aspect of life which was of supreme importance, are, of course, far more vital to the question of early relationships between the races than any mere evidence of trade and the interchange of commodities. Accordingly, it is scarcely surprising to find that Mr. Wace ("Cambridge Ancient History," i. 591) actually considers the establishment of an Egyptian colony in Crete at a very early stage to be a not impossible solution of the question of the connection. "In Early Minoan II., so intense does the Egyptian element become, that it is possible there may even have been established in Crete a colony from Egypt, which was then under the rule of the VIth Dynasty as far as we can tell. Perhaps the disturbances which occurred at the beginning of the Ist and at the downfall of the Vth Dynasty may have driven away considerable bodies of people who sought peace and fortune in Crete, which was perhaps inhabited by a kindred race." It is a most inviting speculation which asks us to imagine a common origin for the two most attractive cultures of the ancient world, whose later developments and inspirations became about as diverse from one another as such things can well be ; but it should be remembered that in the meantime, at all events, it is no more than a speculation. It

The Surrounding Nations

may have been so ; one would like to believe that it was so ; but it is impossible to prove it from our present evidence.

We are on safer ground when we simply say that from the very earliest stage of the development of the Bronze Age civilisation in Crete there is evidence of the most intimate connection between the island and the Nile Valley, and that, indeed, "one of the impulses which promoted the actual development of civilisation in Crete came from Egypt." Even on this minimum of claim the thing is sufficiently interesting and wonderful. Our time has witnessed nothing more remarkable than the gradual emergence from the mists of legend of the third great culture of the ancient world, and the accumulation, amazing in its rapidity, of the evidence which shows that it is practically coeval with its two better-known fellows, and marches step for step along with that of Egypt and of Babylonia. The evidence for this, of course, only exists with regard to Egypt ; but the one thing involves the other.

There is no need to tell here the story of how the excavations, first of Schliemann and his successors at Troy, Mycenæ, Tiryns, and elsewhere, then of Evans, Halbherr, Seager, and a host of others at Knossos, Phaistos, Hagia Triada, Gournia, Mochlos, and other Cretan sites, have given back to us much of the actual fact which lay behind the old legends of the Greek Heroic Age, have justified Homer's backward vision of a Golden Age, when men were wiser, stronger, and more highly civilised than the men of his own time, and have taught us, if not the certainty, at least the high probability that Herodotus and Thucydides were only telling the

The Amarna Age

simple truth when they ascribed the first development of sea-power, and its use for the establishment of an empire, to the kings of the House of Minos. Our purpose will be served by simply tracing, in the light given to us from Egyptian tombs, and from the ruins of the great palaces at Knossos and Phaistos, and the other Cretan sites, the connection between the culture of the Minoans and that of their friendly rivals of the Nile Valley.

Taking, then, Sir Arthur Evans's division of the duration of Minoan culture into three periods, Early, Middle, and Late Minoan, each of these in turn subdivided into three sub-periods, we find evidence that Early Minoan is roughly parallel with the Old Kingdom of Egypt, which extends from about 3500 to about 2650 B.C., using the shorter system of Egyptian chronology. On the longer system of Sir Flinders Petrie, the dates would roughly run from 5500 to 4000 B.C. Within this period Early Minoan I. equates with the 1st, 11nd, and 111rd Egyptian Dynasties; Early Minoan II. with the 1Vth, Vth, and VIth Dynasties; while Early Minoan III. somewhat overlaps the Old Kingdom, beginning about the end of the First Intermediate Period of Egypt, say about 2700 B.C. and lasting till about 2400 B.C. For these very early dates the evidence of connection between the two civilisations lies largely in the use by the Cretans of the time of stone vases closely resembling those of which the Old Kingdom Egyptians were so fond. In some cases the material of these vases shows them to have been importations; in others the Cretans were evidently imitating, in their own soft stone, types wrought originally in the hard materials, diorite, granite, and liparite, which the Egyptians used. The beak-jug of

The Surrounding Nations

Early Minoan pottery is very probably also an imitation of the contemporary spouted vessels which the Egyptian craftsmen wrought in copper, and then imitated in stone and in pottery. Closest of all resemblances are those between the Cretan seals of the time and those of the Old Kingdom Egyptians. The ivory conoid seals of Crete point to a connection with Africa, the nearest possible source of ivory, while the shapes and designs of the seals point to Egyptian influence. At this time Cretan overseas trade must have been active, and, for the time, widespread, as is shown by the pieces of amber and obsidian which have been found in island deposits of this date. Eastern and Southern Crete, especially the Messara plain, which opens out to the southern sea, seem to have been fully occupied by an active and busy population, mainly employed in seafaring.

The next great division of the Cretan culture is Middle Minoan, and its two earlier sections, Middle Minoan I. and II., may be equated roughly with the Middle Kingdom of Egypt, beginning somewhere round about 2300 B.C., and ending, perhaps, somewhere in the Second Intermediate Period ; while Middle Minoan III. again laps over the Egyptian equation a little, falling entirely into the Intermediate Period. In both kingdoms it would appear that this Middle Period was one of the greatest prosperity and the most rapid development. In Egypt the age of the Senuserts and Amenemhats is coming more and more to be regarded as the true Golden Age of Egyptian history; and it would appear as though the Golden Age of the Minoan civilisation also is to be found in this Middle Period. This is the age when the great palaces of Knossos and Phaistos rose into the early

The Amarna Age

splendour which was destroyed in the catastrophe of about 1600 B.C., and was succeeded by the short-lived glories of the Great Palace Period of Late Minoan ; the period, also, when the Labyrinth of Knossos was being matched on Egyptian soil by the Labyrinth which Amenemhat III. was rearing at Hawara, and which, so late as the time of Herodotus, still excited the wonder and admiration of the great historian. It was now, too, that the Minoan potter attained the height of refinement and beauty in the exquisite Kamares polychrome pottery, doing work which for sheer beauty and artistic quality has seldom been equalled and never surpassed.

By this time, say from 2000 to 1700 B.C., intercourse between Crete and Egypt must have been one of the established facts of the life of both peoples. The Minoan was receiving from Egypt new motives for the decoration of his beautiful ware, and was characteristically adapting them to his own taste, displaying in the adaptation an inspiration and a sense of beauty which leave the Egyptian potter far behind. Further, he was taking over also the thoroughly Egyptian art of faïence, and towards the latter end of the period was producing such work in this kind as the Snake Goddesses, and the well-known reliefs of the goat and kids. Here, however, the Minoan artist allowed his new inspiration perhaps to run away with him a little. The Egyptian knew the limits of the style and material too well to venture on the pictorial effects which the Minoan attempted ; and his work, with its sense of limitation, is far more pleasing than the more ambitious work of his Cretan brother. The Minoan is straining his material and process in the effort to get effects which they were never meant to give.



HITTITE HIEROGLYPHS (*pp.* 184, 191, *etc.*)

From "Carchemish," by C. L. Woolley and T. E. Lawrence (British Museum)

The Surrounding Nations

On the other hand, the Egyptian was not slow in showing his appreciation of the really fine work of the Minoan artist. Evidently the polychrome Kamares ware was regularly imported into Egypt at this time, and one of the most beautiful and satisfying examples of what the Minoan potter could do, both in design and colour, is the lovely polychrome vase discovered by Professor Garstang at Abydos. Other examples are common, though there are few which can approach the Abydos vase for sheer beauty. The connection between the two lands was maintained till a late point in the period, as is shown by the statuette of an Egyptian, "Ab-nub, son of Sebek-user," which was found at Knossos, and the lid of an alabaster vessel, bearing the name of the most famous of the Hyksos kings, Khyan, which also came from Knossos. It is to the end of the period, too, that we must date the only evidence which has yet come to light of the fact that Cretan writing was directly influenced as to its methods by Egyptian practice. For the writing of the Cretan linear script, the Minoan used almost invariably the clay tablet and the stylus, thus following, whether as a conscious imitator or not, the Babylonian, and not the Egyptian practice. On the inside of two cups found at Knossos, however, there were inscriptions in the linear script which had been written, not with the stylus while the clay was soft, but with pen and ink, just as the Egyptians wrote.

Middle Minoan closed, much as did the corresponding period in Egypt, with disaster. How the disaster came, whether from without, in the shape of wide-reaching and persistent raiding on the part of Ægean pirates, or from within, in the shape of civil war, we do not know and are never likely to know. In any case the great palaces all

The Amarna Age

show the traces of wholesale destruction at the end of this period, and the same catastrophe which overwhelmed them ruined also the various towns, Gournia, Mochlos, and others ; and for awhile there is a cessation of intercourse between the two lands, which, with that curious parallelism which marks their development right through to the final catastrophe of Knossos, were both passing through a dark and troubled period. The Middle Period had been for both a time of rapid and rich development ; and indeed, just as the Egyptian artist seldom surpassed some of the work which he did for Senusert III. and Amenemhat III., and the Egyptian craftsman scarcely again equalled the combination of grace and richness which he attained in the diadems of the Princess Khnumit, so the Minoan painter did not often match the grace and charm of the Blue Boy fresco, or that of the Ladies in Blue, and the Minoan potter never again came within sight of the beauty of the water-lily cup, or a dozen other masterpieces of this age which might be cited.

From 1600 to 1400 B.C., or thereby, comes the last flowering of the Minoan genius before the great catastrophe which forever eliminated the Minoan from the arena in which the nations of the ancient east were striving for dominion, substituting for his great and highly organised empire the chaos and incoherence of the Peoples of the Sea, and all the other tribes of broken men who for the next two centuries were to be the standing dread of the ancient organised empires. If the Minoan fell at last from his pride of place, at least he fell magnificently. It was no decadent and feeble civilisation which was wiped out by the sack of Knossos, but a power in the very height of its strength. In the art of

The Surrounding Nations

the two periods of Late Minoan which fill the two centuries, we may perhaps trace something of the over-ripeness which is characteristic of an art which has passed its maturity ; but it would not be true to say that this has reached the stage of decay. The ruling feature of the work of the Minoan artist in this stage is naturalism ; and this tendency finds expression both in the fresco-painting of the time, and in the change which substitutes for the polychrome Kamares ware the less attractive colouring and the less restrained design of the Late Minoan potter.

This is the Great Palace Period, when the huge buildings at Knossos and Phaistos took the form which excavation has now revealed to us, when the great staircase of Knossos with its five flights of broad and easy treads was carried out, and when the greater part of the system of halls and chambers, with their dependent offices, was executed, and the amazing sanitary system, which has excited so much wonder and admiration, was evolved. The huge palace of Knossos, with its five acres and more of marvel, is not, in our sense of the word, a great piece of architecture. In fact, it belongs to the type which has been called, perhaps somewhat harshly, "agglutinative architecture." There is not about the palace, any more than about the vast complex of Karnak, any unity of conception, such as a true architect would aim at. Knossos was not built, as we understand the term ; it grew, as the needs of the king and court grew ; and its aim was not the conscious realising of a foreseen and thought-out plan, but the creation of devices to meet necessities. The great central court is indeed a magnificent architectural feature, and the one approach to a unifying idea in the whole building ; but there is no real attempt to balance and

The Amarna Age

group the buildings round the court as in a really planned piece of work. Storeys, halls, and porticoes were added, according to the mood of the time, or the demand for space—a fact which explains a good deal of the “labyrinthine” character of the building, though it may be also partly due to ideas of defence. With all its incoherence, however, the great palace must have been an imposing building, as it rose to the full height of its five storeys on the slope of the river-bank, its open loggias and porticoes, overlooking the valley, giving a note of stateliness and dignity to the mere mass, and its dependent minor buildings clustering around.

Within the great building we should have found the art of the Late Minoan painter in full evidence. It was now that the most of the frescoes which have given us our ideas of Minoan art were painted, though, as we have seen, some of the most interesting of them, such as the Blue Boy and the Ladies in Blue, belong to the preceding period. This is the time when the Cupbearer, almost the first, and still the most perfect, example of the Minoan race to be made known to us, was painted as part of the processional frieze, the time of the dancing-girl and the bull-leaping frescoes, and the miniature frescoes with their astonishingly modern ladies; while at Hagia Triada, on the southern side of the island, the artist was executing the charming naturalistic pictures of women and animals, of which perhaps the most striking is the fragment of the big cat stealing through the undergrowth to leap upon the cock pheasant who is unconsciously sunning himself. This is one of the most remarkable pieces of impressionism which the Cretan artist has left us, and it may serve, as well as any, to

The Surrounding Nations

bring before us the dominant features of Minoan art. Practically all through his career, but most of all in this brilliant period which came just before the catastrophe, the Minoan artist was a law unto himself. He is by far the most modern of ancient artists; infinitely more so than his Egyptian brother (save for a little while in the Amarna period of Egyptian art), and far more so than his descendant and heir, the classic Greek artist. He would satisfy the most modern canon of art, in that his work is simply the record of the emotional impression which has been made upon him by the object with which he is dealing. He always does what he wants to do, and what he feels at the moment, not what his training teaches him that he ought to do. Thus his painting gives you, not the hard literal facts of the scene, but the spirit of it; and his stalking cat, while you might get many better drawn and anatomically correct cats, gives you forever the spirit, the stealthy grace, the pent-up energy ready to be released, and not least the cruelty of his model. The Egyptian would have given you a much better cat from the point of view of accurate representation; but it would not have had the spirit of all the feline race incarnate in it, as in the rapid sketch of the Minoan.

This difference may be due in some measure to the different methods of painting employed by the two races. The Egyptian fresco painting was really not true fresco, but distemper painting; consequently, the painter could work in a more leisurely and exact fashion. The Minoan worked in true fresco, on the wet plaster, and consequently his work had to be much more rapid and impressionistic. But this difference in method is only the expression of a difference in racial spirit. The Egyptian

The Amarna Age

was far more the product of careful and accurate training, a far better draughtsman, and a far more careful executant than the Minoan, who was impatient of restraint of any sort, and whose freedom often degenerates into lawlessness. Thus the Egyptian gives us a far better average of accomplished work, and never shocks us with the slipshod drawing and the unpardonable lapses of taste which sometimes characterise his Cretan brother; but when the Minoan touches his moment of highest inspiration, he is far above out of the sight of the average competent but uninspired Egyptian product. Especially does this difference of spirit show itself in the relation of the two arts to problems of motion. Here is the Egyptian artist's weak point; he seldom ventures to touch the representation of rapid motion at all, and when he does attempt it his work is timid, unsure, and mannered. The Minoan, on the other hand, delights in tackling the very problems which the Egyptian avoids, and while his drawing of the moving object is often very inaccurate, the essential spirit of the motion is caught, and transferred to the painting with unerring swiftness and certainty. The dancer pirouetting, her tresses flying as she whirls; the swallow swooping through the air; the dolphins of Knossos, scattering the foam-bells in their rush through the waves, or the flying-fish of Phylakopi—all are admirable illustrations of this faculty, in which the Minoans had a yet surer gift and a far happier spirit than even the Assyrian sculptors, though they fell far below them in knowledge and accuracy.

The same lack of restraint which characterised Minoan painting shows itself also in the pottery of this period. The Middle Minoan potter, even though his colour was

The Surrounding Nations

sometimes a little garish, had the idea of the limitations of his material, and kept himself within them ; but Late Minoan is just, as it has been called, “a riot of naturalism,” in which the sense of the limitations of the art and the curbing of design to agree with these is entirely wanting, though the naturalistic pictures, mostly of marine life, are often in themselves of great beauty.

On the whole one pictures this last phase of the wonderful culture of Crete, before the catastrophe which deposed Knossos and raised Mycenæ to the position of supremacy over the Ægean area, as a strange mixture of incongruous elements. Incongruities were what the Minoan never bothered himself about apparently, so long as they did not shock his sense of the beautiful. Perhaps his mental attitude is reflected in the curious contrast presented between the male and female dress of the Minoan court, where the male garb was simply the small loin-cloth or short kilt, which represents the simplest element to which clothing can be reduced ; while the female dress is the wonderful get-up of the miniature frescoes—bell-shaped skirts, elaborately flounced, tight bodices, excessively low-cut in the neck, and all the armament of mid-Victorian beauty. Nothing strikes one with a greater sense of incongruity than this mixing of styles of dress, which seem to belong respectively to an age not far removed from barbarism, and to a highly civilised, perhaps rather over-civilised, period ; but the Minoan did not worry over it. This disregard of incongruities goes through the whole life of the place and time, so that side by side with the love for the beautiful in nature and in animal life, in which the Minoan has never been excelled, you have the strange twist towards a love of cruelty and a

The Amarna Age

delight in witnessing danger and pain which produced the taste for such cruel and bloody sports or religious exercises (it does not matter much which you call them), as the bull-grappling, which is one of the most constantly pictured aspects of Minoan life. Further, you have the fact that, like the Assyrian, the Minoan not only delighted to witness such horrors as those of the bull-grappling, but wished to have them always before his eyes, when he could not enjoy the actual thing, in the art with which he decorated his home. Both the fresco work at Knossos and elsewhere, and the extraordinarily fine and vigorous work of the ivory figurines of the Bull-leapers, bear witness to this unpleasant aspect of Minoan nature.

One sees the same curious and altogether unpleasant aspect of the nature of this great people in the wild and sometimes evil fantasies which they allowed to run riot in some aspects of their art. Some of the nightmare figures of what were presumably divinities or at least supernatural beings, which appear on small articles, gems, and seals, reveal a perverted taste and imagination. "The artist," says Dr. Hall, "who produced the sometimes beautiful, sometimes evil, designs of the seals, impressions of which were found at Zakro, had an evil mind. While enjoying and admiring the sight of the remains of this splendid civilisation, we cannot shake off the impression that it had a by no means admirable background." And the little which we know of their religion suggests that this unhealthy perversion and tendency to cruelty for its own sake was no mere accident or temporary aberration, but was fundamental—a twisted strand that ran through the whole gay web of Minoan life. (Did it reappear in the unpleasant Greek habit of killing defenceless prisoners

The Surrounding Nations

—a custom otherwise so irreconcilable with the level of Greek civilisation ?)

Whatever else may be said about Cretan religion, there can be no question that the thing about it which made the most profound impression upon the other peoples of the Ægean was the abominable Minotaur story with its sacrifice every ninth year of youths and maidens. Whatever the distortion that this legend may have undergone, there must have been some ground on which to base it originally. "The story of the Minotaur," says Dr. Hall, "preserves the tradition of a bull-religion at Knossos, which demanded human sacrifices." Miss Jane Harrison, though she is more cautious, comes to much the same conclusion. "Behind the legend of Pasiphaë, made monstrous by the misunderstanding of immigrant conquerors, it can scarcely be doubted that there lurks some sacred mystical ceremony of ritual wedlock (*ἱερὸς γάμος*) with a primitive bull-headed divinity. . . . The bull-Dionysos of Thrace, when he came to Crete, found a monstrous god, own cousin to himself. . . . Of the ritual of the bull-god in Crete, we know that it consisted in part of the tearing and eating of a bull, and behind is the dreadful suspicion of human sacrifice" ("Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion," pp. 482, 483). The supreme divinity of the Minoans may have been the beneficent Great Mother and Lady of the Wild Creatures (though even she had a dark and fierce, possibly sinister aspect, as her association with the lion and the snake shows); but the feature of the cult which stamped itself on the imagination of the outside world was nothing beneficent, but the dark and horrible cruelty of the sacrificial rites of the bull-god, with his human victims, which was finally

The Amarna Age

crystallised in the legend of the grisly monster of the Labyrinth. There is in all this element a persistent survival of the conviction that in Minoan religion there was an under-spirit of distinctly degraded and sinister type, not to be paralleled by anything in Egyptian religious practice. The Egyptian Pharaoh is certainly pictured as slaying his prisoners before Amen, and we know of at least one instance, that of Amenhotep II., in which the picture was justified by the fact; but there is no evidence that during the historic period human sacrifice was in any sense part of the ritual of any Egyptian god.

Professor Breasted has stated that, during the XVIIIth Dynasty and Late Minoan, Cretan religion was being directly influenced by importations of Egyptian ritual: "In Crete Egyptian religious forms had been introduced, in one case seemingly under the personal leadership of an Egyptian priest" ("Cambridge Ancient History," ii. 97). The sole evidence for this piece of missionary work on the part of Egypt to a land which, if the Minotaur story have any basis in fact, certainly needed it, is the representation on the Harvester Vase of Hagia Triada of the individual who brandishes the sistrum in the crowd of seemingly rejoicing peasants. The sistrum is certainly an Egyptian religious instrument of noise, if not of music, and the sistrum-bearer is perhaps somewhat stouter than the average wasp-waisted Minoan. But Dr. Hall's description of Professor Breasted's religious ceremony is somewhat unkind: "The wonderful little relief of the drunken harvest procession on the vase from Hagia Triada, with its peasants, howling like their modern representatives on St. George's day, stamping along in chorus after their grinning old coryphæus in his shaggy capote.'

The Surrounding Nations

The fact that the procession is obviously a drunken harvest rejoicing, as Dr. Hall says, is of course no bar to the possibility of its also being a religious function, though in that case it does not seem that Egyptian influence had been entirely for edification ; but, apart from his sistrum, there is no other evidence to identify the individual in question with an Egyptian priest, and the vase is surely a scanty piece of evidence on which to build a theory of Egyptian missionary zeal—a thing which is in itself about the last thing one would imagine Egypt showing at any period of her history. There is certainly no evidence of any introduction of Minoan religious forms into Egypt during this period or any other. Such an idea was alien to the whole ancient conception of religion, which was essentially local ; and though Akhenaten was to attempt to change that to the universalism which is really the striking feature of his religious revolution, the time for that was not yet, and before it came, Crete as a single solid unit had ceased to be.

Curiously enough, when we think of the other evidence for frequent and close intercourse between the two powers, the evidence for mutual borrowing of commodities and ideas is scantier in this Late Minoan Period than in Middle Minoan. In spite of the admiration with which each nation regarded some of the products of its neighbour, each preferred to go its own way in the arts and crafts, though it might borrow and adapt some of the foreign motives which struck its fancy. Perhaps the most striking example of this preference for national to imported ideas is seen in the architecture of both states. In both lands architecture during this period was exceedingly vigorous and full of new ideas ; and a great propor-

The Amarna Age

tion of what is most admired alike in Egypt, in Crete, and in the mainland colonies of Crete, such as Mycenæ and Tiryns, belongs to this time. In Egypt we have such fine work as Der el-Bahri, which, though not absolutely an original idea, is so greatly an improvement upon the plan of the Mentuhotep temple beside it as to be really a new creation; the fine festal Hall of Thothmes III., and all the rest of his work at Karnak, such as his Hall of Records with its beautiful Lotus and Papyrus pillars; the noble forecourt of Amenhotep III. at Luxor, and the still grander unfinished Hypostyle Hall at the same place; while the records of Amenhotep tell us what we have lost in the destruction of his funerary temple. In Crete there is nothing in the great palaces to parallel the achievements of the Egyptian architect; yet Knossos and Phaistos are imposing enough, and few palaces could match the grandeur of the great staircase at Phaistos, while we have to remember that the great tomb at Isopata dates only from a short time before the beginning of Late Minoan, and that the singularly striking and dignified architecture of the so-called Treasuries of Mycenæ and Orchomenos belongs to the period. Structurally, these Bee-hive Tombs are the finest thing that the Ægean culture has left us. "More impressive," says Dr. Hall, "than anything Egypt has to show, and far more impressive, in my opinion, than the interior chamber of the Great Pyramid. For here we have an art of building more developed than that of Egypt." Yet in spite of the activity and inventive power displayed on both sides of the sea (or perhaps because of the inventive power, which felt itself sufficient to the needs of the time), there is hardly a trace of borrowing. There

The Surrounding Nations

are such trifling similarities as the custom, prevalent both in Crete and Egypt, of cutting the lowest drum of a square pillar out of the block of the pavement slab below it; and there is the possibility (it is no more) that the inverted taper and capitals of the columns of the Festal Hall of Thothmes III., may, as already suggested, be an imitation of the downward tapering Minoan column; but that is pretty much all. The Minoan potter was fond enough of using the Egyptian motives of the lotus and papyrus for the adornment of his vases; but the Minoan never used these graceful forms, as the Egyptian did, for the clustered bud or open-flower columns which are the distinguishing notes of Egyptian architecture.

The same is true of painting, where, as we have seen, the artists of the two lands, working with different methods, were also inspired by an essentially diverse genius in either case. Egyptian motives do appear in some of the wonderful inlay work of the Mycenæan metal workers, such as the dagger-blade with the cat hunting wild-fowl; but though the Egyptian craftsmen were doing this sort of thing long before the Ægeans turned to it, and did it magnificently, yet one scarcely dares to suggest borrowing in an art which, as Homer shows us, was the most characteristic art of the Heroic Age, and in which the Ægean artist needed to own no master.

There are, of course, direct importations of articles which took the fancy of either nation. The Ægean "Stirrup-vase" of the period is frequently found in Egypt, and specimens of the splendid Minoan work in metal are recorded, with an exaggeration in size which may perhaps indicate the measure of the admiration with which they were regarded; while Egypt repays these

The Amarna Age

gifts by the somewhat questionable boon of the noisy sistrum, and the less doubtful gift of the bronze hand mirrors with ivory handles which enabled the Minoan ladies to survey their wonderfully dressed back hair, and no doubt served their spouses also for the arrangement of the elaborate curls of their coxcombs. Such things, however, are trifles ; and, apart from them, it appears that the arts, great and small, of the two nations, pretty much went their own way, and followed their own native inspiration. Art in both lands was too big a thing, too truly national, and with too long a tradition behind it, to be readily changed to a new orientation by any foreign influence, however strong. In both cases the artist never hesitated to take good things wherever he found them, and, using the prerogative of genius, to make them his own by the touches which transform their spirit. You cannot, for instance, imagine anything more truly Egyptian than the motive of the beautiful lily-spiral vase from Phaistos, nor anything more characteristically Minoan than the vase when the Cretan artist has completed his transformation of his borrowing. But all this leaves the two arts essentially independent. There is influence, stimulus, but never for a moment servile imitation and submission.

Indeed, whatever may have been the early connections or lack of connection between the two races, their genius developed on radically diverse lines. Egyptian art is far, of course, from being the stiff, austere, and somewhat grim thing, bound in the fetters of iron convention, which it is often represented as being. Anyone who is familiar with its tomb-painting and relief sculpture will know how utterly such a conception wrongs one of the most genial and cheerful of races. But, at the same time, the ruling

The Surrounding Nations

characteristic of the Egyptian artistic genius all through is its sense of dignity, its respect for law and accuracy, and its conviction that each form of art had its definite limitations, beyond which art was no longer art but merely lawlessness. The characteristics of the Minoan genius were exactly the opposite of these. The Cretan artist knew no law but that of his own pleasure. He did what pleased him, and as it pleased him; and therefore the result was sometimes a marvel of beauty, and sometimes a piece of rank bad work which an Egyptian would not have tolerated for a moment. To put the difference in a sentence: the Egyptian, all through, did homage to a standard, sometimes to the extent of cramping his own individuality; the Minoan was so much in love with his own individuality that he disdained to have a standard at all. Consequently the Minoan occasionally reaches a height which the Egyptian never touches, and often sinks to depths of slovenliness and bad taste which the Egyptian never fathoms; but the Egyptian average is higher, and his work all along more accomplished than that of his wayward brother. It is perhaps because of this impatience of control that the Minoan never, seemingly, so much as attempted the art of sculpture in the round in which the Egyptian showed himself such a master. Small sculpture, such as the ivory bull-leaping figurines, suited the Minoan genius exactly; but there was too much law and order, and perhaps too much hard work about a life-size or a colossal statue, for the pleasure-loving Cretan to find any charm for himself in it. No doubt he wondered and admired when he saw it in Thebes or Memphis; but he had no desire to imitate it. If the Egyptian liked to put himself to so much trouble, he was welcome to do it, and

The Amarna Age

the result was certainly very fine ; the Cretan went home to paint flying swallows and dancing-girls, or to carve his dainty little ivory toys.

It has been suggested that there is a time at which the two arts do approach in spirit, and in which it is the stubborn and immovable art of Egypt which descends for awhile from its pedestal, and yields to the influence of the Minoan naturalism. In the Egyptian art of the Amarna period, a new spirit of naturalism is certainly breathed into all the old forms of Egyptian tradition, as we shall see later ; but this is quite another thing from the direct imitation of Minoan ideals which is suggested. It has to be remembered that by the time that Akhenaten began to preach his gospel of Truth and Naturalness and Reality, Knossos had already been lying in ruins for a quarter of a century, so that a new generation of Egyptian artists had grown up, which was no longer subject to anything like the same quantity or quality of Minoan influence as its predecessor ; though Late Minoan III. work of the time succeeding the sack of Knossos is still by no means uncommon in Egypt. Further, it is difficult to see anything in the new development of Egyptian art in Akhenaten's time which is so markedly non-Egyptian that it must be attributed to outside influence. The new movement is entirely in line with the royal teaching, and in obedience to the demand for truth the ancient conventions are discarded ; but the truth which Akhenaten's artists present is not Minoan truth in any sense. It is truth as seen through eyes which were still genuinely Egyptian eyes, and naturalism with an Egyptian accent, not with the accent of Crete. From the earliest days of the Old Kingdom the Egyptian



HITTITE TYPES (p. 192)

By kind permission of Sir Flinders Petrie

The Surrounding Nations

was a lover of nature and the open air. What happened in the Amarna period was that for a time he ceased to express that love in the idiom of his ancestors, and found an idiom of his own that expressed his feelings more aptly; but the idiom was a native one all the same. There is, in short, no need to call in any outside agency to account for a change which can be perfectly well accounted for by the impulse of Akhenaten's doctrine of truth and reality acting upon the already present Egyptian love of nature and sense of its beauty. Influence there may have been, as there has been in the case of every art that the world has known; but all the essential elements of the new art are as thoroughly Egyptian and as little Minoan as anything in Old Kingdom or Middle Kingdom art can be.

There remains the question of how it was that the great and flourishing empire which had endured for so long, and which even in Late Minoan II., in spite of hints of over-ripeness in art and decadence in religion, was still so powerful, should have come so suddenly and so utterly to its end. Certainty on this point is for the present unattainable. We know that the catastrophe of Knossos happened, and along with it that of the other important sites of Minoan power and wealth; we know also approximately when the great disaster happened; but who were the agents of destruction, or what were the causes which brought about the strife which ended in the sack and burning of the great palaces, we do not know. The utmost to which we can attain in the meantime is the balancing of possibilities against one another; one can scarcely even say that a probability emerges. The present tendency is to believe that the destruction was

The Amarna Age

probably wrought by Crete's own children, the mainland Minoans, descendants of the colonists whom the Island Kingdom had sent forth in her early days to found her outposts and trading stations on the mainland; and the undoubted fact that from about 1400 B.C. Mycenæ, the chief of these mainland strongholds of Minoan power, assumes the supremacy which Knossos had lost seems to suggest that this may be the true explanation.

Why Mycenæ should thus have turned upon her motherland is another question which so far admits of no answer. Two suggestions have been forthcoming: the first, that of Dr. Duncan Mackenzie, that under the pressure of the immigrant Achæans from the north, some of the mainland Minoans sought a new home for themselves in their motherland, and being resisted, took by force what was denied them on peaceable terms, and in the taking incidentally destroyed the old order in Crete, substituting for it the form of culture which we have known as Mycenæan. The other is the interesting speculation of Mr. Wace, which sees in the destruction of the House of Minos the earliest parallel to the revolt of our own American colonies, and the earliest example of the dangers which attend on taxation without representation. "The story of Theseus, though of course referring to later times, suggests that the people of the mainland, who had advanced extremely rapidly in civilisation, since the first advent of the Minoan culture to their shores, driven to revolt by oppressive taxation, like the English of America, attacked, defeated, and destroyed the palace and the House of Minos" ("Cambridge Ancient History," ii. 443). "Oppressive taxation" is rather a good euphemism for the tribute of youths and

The Surrounding Nations

maidens to be sacrificed to the monstrous god of Crete ; otherwise the speculation is quite within the bounds of possibility. And that is all that can be said either for this or any other explanation of the unquestionable facts.

With the fall of Knossos the chapter of intimate relations between the island power and the Nile Valley practically ceases, though, as we have seen, objects of Late Minoan III. art are still found in Egypt, and indeed make their first appearance suddenly at Akhenaten's new palace at Tell el-Amarna. But now in place of the age of a great dominant central power established in Crete, whose commercial interests prompted friendly relations with the other great established power in Egypt, we come to the age of the wanderings of the Sea-Peoples, and all over the Ægean and the Libyan Sea are scattered the rovers' fleets, squadrons of broken men, "fighting to fill their bellies daily," a pest and a danger to the trade of the great powers, and even at last a threat to the kingdoms themselves. It was nearly two hundred years before the result of the collapse of the Minoan Empire was to threaten the Egypt of Ramses III. with a new version of the Hyksos conquest ; but the description which Ramses gives of the situation just before the great invasion of the Sea-Peoples—"the Isles were restless, disturbed among themselves at one and the same time"—might be applied with truth to any time after the catastrophe.

The fall of Knossos was the first ominous breach in the system of relationships carefully adjusted between great stable powers, which is characteristic of the period of the middle XVIIIth Dynasty. The balance of power had been rudely tilted, and was not to recover its equilibrium until an entirely new adjustment had been reached.

CHAPTER V

THE SURROUNDING NATIONS : THE HITTITES AND THE MITANNIANS

THE next place in our survey of the actors in the drama of the Amarna Age must be given to that strange and enigmatic race, whose emergence upon the field of our knowledge as a real and very efficient entity in the history of the ancient east has been almost as unexpected as that of the Minoans, which it only preceded by a few years. In one sense the Hittite Empire, short-lived as it was, proved to be the determining factor in the crisis of the old world. History has few parallels to the brevity of the period of power and glory of the Hittite Confederation. Among the long-lived kingdoms of the ancient east, the empire of the House of Shub-biluliuma is like Jonah's gourd, which grew up in a night, and perished in a night. Egypt, Babylonia, even Assyria and the Minoan Empire, though we can trace in the story of even the least known of them the evidences of periods of growth and of decline, were all powers which endured in greater or less splendour for century after century, so that they were established facts of the situation age by age; but to our present knowledge the Hittite power comes swiftly out of the darkness, blazes before the eyes of the world for a little space like the comet that

" From its horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war,"

and passes away into the darkness again almost as swiftly as the comet does. But in the brief interval between its

The Surrounding Nations

coming and its going, it had, with little profit to itself, and with less than none to the general well-being of the world, exercised an influence which altered entirely the balance of power in the Near East, and turned the current of destiny into another channel.

We cannot at present, even with the utmost taxing of our imaginations, form any picture that has any approach to historical reality of a Hittite kingdom at a date further back than 1500 B.C. From that date we have a few scraps of information, "rugged names" of kings, such as Hattushilish I., Murshilish I., Hantilish, Huzziash, and Telibunush, and, coupled with some of the names, a few claims to conquests, some of which are obviously impossible; and this period has been glorified by the title of "the proto-Hattic imperial period." It is not until 1400 B.C. that Hatti definitely comes into view as an historic reality, under its able and unlovely king Shubbiluliuma, "the Hittite Bismarck," as he has been well named; by 1272 B.C. the Hittite bolt is really shot, and the glory of the kingdom begins to fade; by 1200 B.C. the Hittite Empire vanishes in the whirlpool of conflicting peoples, whose final effort was repelled by Ramses III. During these two centuries, the period in which Hatti really counts as an efficient factor in the shaping of the course of history is one of little more than a century, from the rise of Shubbiluliuma to the signing of the treaty of peace between Ramses II. and Hattushilish III., which closed the long strife between the two great powers. Shubbiluliuma's policy was all through definitely anti-Egyptian; but a pretence of friendship was kept up till some time after the accession of Akhenaten, so that it may be said that the actual wrestle of the two nations

The Amarna Age

lasted almost exactly a century. Seldom has a century of strife been fraught with more momentous results, not only for the powers actually engaged in the conflict, but for the world at large.

When the struggle began, Egypt was the dominant power of the ancient east. The question of whether she could have maintained her dominance for any lengthened period, had not the struggle with the Hittites sapped her strength, is of course only an academic one, as the thing was never put to the proof; and one can perhaps see reasons for believing that Egypt had not the staying power or the hardness of spirit which might have enabled her to maintain her grip upon her Syrian Empire: but one can scarcely doubt that the continuance of the comparatively mild and merciful Egyptian dominance, even for a century or two longer, would have been a vast improvement on the chaos of aimless bloodshed which followed her collapse, and on the ruthless Assyrian dominion which was its ultimate outcome. That century of strife between 1372 and 1272 B.C. put such a possibility forever out of reach. Hatti thwarted and exhausted Egypt, so that it was only a weary and decrepit shadow of former greatness which was left to oppose the remorseless advance of the hard Assyrian; but she gained no advantage to herself by the crippling of her adversary. Wisdom came to her too late, and before the treaty of 1272 B.C. put an end to the long conflict she was even more exhausted than her rival—so exhausted, in fact, as to be eliminated from the list of the great powers henceforward.

In the great attack by the Sea-Peoples, which was repulsed by Ramses III., the Hatti, indeed, still figure,

The Surrounding Nations

but no longer as an independent sovereign state. They have "sunk to a subordinate position in the service of recent conquerors"; and the proud state which was able, a century before, to meet the whole might of Egypt on equal terms, and to say "hitherto, but no further" to the armies of Ramses II., merely furnishes a contingent to be dragged along in the wake of the rabble of obscure tribes which poured through Syria against Egypt, and to share in their defeat at the hands of her old rival.

What, then, was this race whose influence on the history of the old world was destined to be so brief and so fatal? If we have known something of the Minoans for the last twenty-five years, our knowledge of the Hittites, such as it is, goes only a few years further back, beginning, it may be said, practically in 1884, when Dr. William Wright published his "Empire of the Hittites." "Until forty years ago, or less," says Dr. Cowley, "the Hittites were still grouped with Hivites and Jebusites as an insignificant Syrian tribe unknown outside the Bible." Even in the Old Testament, the references to them are scattered and not very illuminative. Genesis x. 15 tells us that "Canaan begat Sidon his first-born, and Heth," "which is only a way of saying that in the records on which this chapter is based, Hittites were described as settled in North Syria." Then follows the well-known passage in which Abraham bargains with Ephron the Hittite, in the audience of the children of Heth, for the cave of Machpelah—a scene characteristically Oriental in its combination of stately courtesy and apparent indifference to the question of filthy lucre on the part of the owner of the property, with the determination to get a good round price for the article in question before surrendering it. Then we learn

The Amarna Age

that Esau, the son of Isaac, has married two Hittite women, and that his mother is very disgusted because of these aliens being brought into the household. Thereafter the name occurs here and there throughout the Old Testament, as in the name of the captain of David's army, "Uriah the Hittite," till we come to the passage in II. Kings vii., in which the panic-stricken Syrians before Samaria say to one another : " Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians." In all these references there is nothing to suggest any particular importance in the tribe named, save perhaps that the coupling of it in the last passage with Egypt may hint at a power somewhat greater than that of the petty states around.

In 1872, however, Wright, then a missionary at Damascus, was able to get casts of the "Hamath Stones," pieces of basalt bearing what seemed to be inscriptions in an unknown hieroglyphic script. These stones had been seen, or at least one of them had, by the French traveller La Roque in 1722, and by Burckhardt in 1822, and had been copied imperfectly by various travellers in the seventies of last century. Wright's casts, and his study of them, and of other similar material, published in 1884, definitely directed the attention of scholars to the subject of this almost unknown race, and "Hittitology" became a recognised branch of the study of the ancient east, and, thanks largely to the untiring labours of Professor Sayce, began to make rapid progress, though sorely hampered by the fact that no key such as that which the Rosetta Stone and the Philæ Obelisk gave to Champollion for the solution of the enigma of Egyptian hieroglyphic was forthcoming in the case of the Hittite

The Surrounding Nations

inscriptions. Specimens of the highly characteristic Hittite hieroglyphics, and of the art connected with them, began to be found over a very wide area of Asia Minor. Roughly speaking, sculptures and inscriptions of the class which we call Hittite are found from Hamath in the south of Asia Minor to Euyuk in the north, and from the Euphrates in the east to the Ionian coast in the west, with a central area, in which the Hittite power was obviously at home, at the eastern end of the great peninsula of Asia Minor, where it unites with the main body of the continent. More precisely it extends, as regards its central area, from 32 to 39 degrees east longitude, and from 35 to 40 degrees north latitude. Outside this central area, the occurrence of Hittite relics is sporadic.

Hittitology, therefore, had evidently assets. As Dr. Cowley puts it, "You do not set up bulky monuments for fun." Evidently the people involved were a widespread power. They must have occupied a large place in history. Who were they, then? and how did they so completely disappear that scarcely a trace of them is to be found in all Greek literature?

As far back as 1828, Champollion saw at Aix the famous Sallier Papyrus (III.), which contains part of the so-called Poem of Pentaur describing the battle of Kadesh. Even at this early stage, he was able to recognise that the writing told the story of a battle between the Egyptians under Ramses II. and a race whose name he read as the "Schéto," and whom he considered to be Scythians. Later there were found in the Annals of Thothmes III. at Karnak references to the tribute of a race whom the king calls the "Great Kheta," and a copy

The Amarna Age

of the treaty of peace which was made in 1272 B.C. between Ramses II. and a prince whom the Egyptians named Khetasar, the Great Chief of the Kheta. Assyria, also, yielded inscriptions mentioning a race called the Khatti, with whom the Assyrian relations were mostly hostile. The gradual accumulation of evidence all pointed in the one direction. The existing monuments and inscriptions indicated the former existence of a powerful and widespread race, whose central stronghold was in the eastern part of Asia Minor, but who had extended their power down into North Syria, and westwards almost to the sea-coast. The Old Testament, and the Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions, all provided us with names for a race otherwise unknown—names which differ so slightly as to make it plain that they all refer to the same people. Though it could not be certain at this stage, yet it seemed at least highly probable that the people of the native monuments and the people of the foreign inscriptions were the same. So Dr. Wright put the matter. His argument may be summed up thus : “Here is a people great enough to leave its traces through Cappadocia, down to Syria, and even as far west as Ionia. They were neither Egyptian nor Babylonian. The single power of which we know which could have done this, and vanished before Greek history begins, is that which the Egyptians called the Great Kheta, the Old Testament the Children of Heth or the Hittites, and the Assyrians the Hatti or Khatti.” The argument is not conclusive, and at most only suggests a high degree of probability ; but the complete demonstration has not been unduly long in following.

After 1884 the accumulation of native material went

The Surrounding Nations

on steadily, and "Hittite" monuments and inscriptions were found in many sites of Asia Minor. In 1906 Hugo Winckler entered upon a series of excavations which were finally to settle the question, and reveal to us, with at least a certain approach to clearness, the outlines of the fortunes of the great Hittite state, or rather Confederation. The site which was chosen was that of Boghaz-Keui, whose mounds had long been known to cover the remains of an important city, which some held to be the ancient Pteria, captured by Cræsus, as Herodotus tells us, before the indecisive battle with Cyrus, which was fought in its immediate neighbourhood. Near this site, at a spot named Iasily Kaya, some remarkable rock sculptures were known to exist, and in 1839 Texier published drawings of them in the "*Description de l'Asie Mineure*."

Winckler's excavations were amazingly successful. The place proved to have been the ancient capital of the Hittite Confederation at the time of its greatest power and glory—Hattushash, as we now know its name to have been—and among the other discoveries were found the state archives of the realm, amounting to 20,000 tablets or fragments of tablets, written in Babylonian fashion in cuneiform. Some of these tablets, like those of Tell el-Amarna, were written in Semitic cuneiform, which was then the language of diplomacy and international intercourse. These, of course, could be read directly, and proved of the utmost value in enabling us to trace the history of the rise of the Hittite power to a position of equality with the greatest powers of the old world. Along with these were tablets which, though written with the cuneiform signs, were in the native language of the land, to which for the time being no key

The Amarna Age

had been found. It was certainly not a Semitic language, but beyond that not much could be said, nor can it be said that certainty has yet been reached on a good many points with regard to it, though considerable progress has now been made in the decipherment of some of the records in the native tongue. Curiously there were practically no inscriptions found at Boghaz-Keui in the hieroglyphic system of writing, which first attracted the attention of scholars—a fact whose significance has been variously interpreted, as we shall see later. A few isolated hieroglyphic signs occur on the sculptures, but nothing like an inscription. The signs which do appear are of the same order as those on the Hamath Stones.

One of the extraordinary pieces of good luck attending upon Winckler's work was the discovery of a copy, or rather a draft, in Babylonian cuneiform, of the famous Treaty of Peace, made between the Hittite king and Ramses II.—a treaty with which we were familiar through the Egyptian version of it. The chances against such a discovery being made must have been very heavy, and the find was therefore all the more gratifying. It proved that the Egyptian version of the treaty was essentially a faithful one, the variations between the two copies being only such as were doubtless made, to suit Egyptian susceptibilities, before the final version was engraved, as the Egyptian record tells us, on a plate of silver, for transmission to Ramses. But, what is still more important, it proves beyond a doubt the identity of this race of the monuments and hieroglyphics with the Hittites. The king of the Boghaz-Keui version is Hattushilish III., manifestly the Khetasar of the Egyptian version; the Hatti are the Kheta of the Egyptian monuments, and

The Surrounding Nations

the Khatti of the Assyrians, and the Hittites of the Old Testament; while the treaty gives us a fixed date, 1272 B.C., at which Boghaz-Keui or Hattushash was the capital of the Hittite state, then somewhat past the height of its power, and verging upon the decline.

All this, however, though interesting and important in itself, does not touch the question of who the Hittites actually were, and what were their racial affinities. If the evidence of the language has been rightly interpreted by men like Hrozný and Forrer, then the answer to the question is going to turn out a very interesting one indeed—one of the most remarkable results of modern investigation into the past. These scholars agree in finding that the non-Babylonian writings in cuneiform found at Boghaz-Keui belong to six different but related native dialects, to which they have given the names, Kanesian, Luvian, Balaic, proto-Hattic, Harrian, and Mandaic; but the important part of their conclusions is that all the dialects belong to the Indo-European group of languages, and that, indeed, they are most closely akin to a primitive West-Aryan speech, such as Old Latin. Plainly, then, if this identification holds good, we enter into a most interesting set of possibilities with regard to the affinities of the Hittite race. As Dr. Hall has said: "The Italian connection of this language, if proved, gives us much food for thought in connection with the traditional relationship, borne out by archæological comparisons, between the Hittites and the Etruscans. What if Etruscan should turn out after all to be Indo-European?"

Be this last point as it may, the discovery of the West-Aryan character of the Hittite speech, if substantiated, forces us to a rearrangement of our ideas as to the race

The Amarna Age

and its origin. The old view that their original home was in Syria, where we find them about 2000 B.C. along with other tribes mentioned in the Old Testament, and that from Syria they spread northwards to Cappadocia, and eastwards to Carchemish, must go, along with the more modern one, that they were a native Anatolian people, neither Semitic nor Aryan, and possibly akin to the Minoans. Syria was manifestly not their first habitat. As far back as their records enable us to trace them, the centre of their establishment is in Cappadocia, and their capital is at Boghaz-Keui; but we must imagine long before that a time of migration, when this Indo-European people came down through the Balkan area, crossed the Hellespont or the Bosphorus, and forced its way into the heart of Asia Minor, enslaving, no doubt, the aboriginal population of Anatolia. It may well have been that this immigration of West-Aryans took place much about the same time as the influx of Indo-Europeans, who, coming from the Oxus-lands perhaps about 2000 B.C., eventually established themselves as the Kassite Dynasty at Babylon, and sent off a branch of the migration upstream to found the kingdom of Mitanni. The two tides of West and East Aryan met on about the 38th degree of east longitude, which roughly marks the dividing line between the sphere of the East-Aryans in Mitanni and that of the Hittites.

Hitherto we have only mentioned the hieroglyphic writing of the Hittites as being the thing which originally drew the attention of scholars to the race; and indeed not much more can safely be said so far; for our present knowledge, such as it is, of things Hittite has come, not from them, but from the Semitic cuneiform and Hittite cuneiform tablets. It has been already noticed that there

The Surrounding Nations

are practically no hieroglyphic inscriptions at Boghaz-Keui, and on the whole the hieroglyphics are mainly to be found in the more southerly part of the Hittite sphere of influence—a geographical distinction which roughly corresponds to the historic fact that Hittite expansion seems to have been largely westwards in the earlier days of the nation, and mainly southwards in its later days. This distinction has suggested to Dr. Cowley the theory that the use of cuneiform is a feature of the earlier development of the Hittites, that it was gradually superseded by the development of the hieroglyphic, and that this substitution is to be seen in its earliest beginnings at Boghaz-Keui, where, as we have already seen, single hieroglyphic symbols are occasionally engraved on the sculptures. While this theory would certainly account for what is an actual fact, it seems extremely difficult to believe that the course of development can possibly have been one so entirely opposed to what appears to be the natural course. To imagine that a race which had been using for long the convenient cuneiform system should have finally discarded it in favour of the clumsy and difficult hieroglyphic appears contrary to all common-sense, and to the rooted instinct of human nature towards the simplest and laziest way in language. It seems much more probable that Dr. Hall's view is correct. "We can hardly think that the characteristic hieroglyphic writing of the Hittites was of Aryan origin. We see no trace of any particular characteristic culture brought into Western Asia by these Aryans, and it is more probable that the language of the hieroglyphs will turn out to be the native pre-Aryan idiom of Anatolia, whatever the language written in cuneiform may be."

The Amarna Age

Curiously, the distinction between the form of script seems also to be paralleled by a racial distinction, if we may rely with any confidence upon the evidence of the monuments, native and foreign, which have preserved the personal appearance of members of the race. For the earlier period we are dependent upon the careful Egyptian studies of their opponents in the Hittite wars of the thirteenth century B.C. The type there represented is quite unmistakable, thin-faced, and hungry-looking, with prominent nose, receding forehead, oblique eyes, and strongly accentuated lines from the angle of the nose to the angle of the mouth ; by no means a beautiful type, with a strong suggestion of a Mongolian connection somewhere in the past, and of a good deal of cruelty in the present. The native sculptures from Carchemish deal, of course, with the later time when the Hittite state was only a shadow of its former self, and when the centre of its life had passed from Boghaz-Keui to the stronghold at the crossing of the Euphrates. Further, they are so crude and rough as to be scarcely fit to be compared with the careful and accomplished Egyptian work. The Egyptian sculptor was a master in the art of seizing and fixing racial or personal characteristics, and these Hittite types of his strike one at once as being faithful studies, with perhaps just the slight hint of caricature which would make them acceptable to Egyptian taste ; the Hittite work is the honest and conscientious effort of a competent stone-mason who has been set to a task for which he has no qualifications except that he can cut stone. Still he succeeds in conveying an impression of a sort, and it is one as far removed from that of the Egyptian work as one can well imagine. His Hittites

God with sword. Chief god with lightning-
emblem. Mother-goddess. Son-god. Twin goddesses of
the double eagle.



HITTITE SCULPTURES—IASILI KAYA (p. 206)
From Garstang's "Land of the Hittites" (Constable)

The Surrounding Nations

are of a much coarser and bluffer type—often bearded, as contrasted with the hairless faces of the Egyptian portraits, broad-headed, where the earlier portraits were long-headed, different, in short, in every respect. The Carchemish sculptures, in fact, suggest a strenuous effort to imitate the masterly work of the Assyrian sculptors—an effort, which has unfortunately only resulted in a travesty of the model.

Are we then to infer that in the Hittite race we have really to deal with two races? Such is Dr. Cowley's theory, and in accordance with his conception of the evidence as to the scripts, he suggests that the native sculptor pictures for us the real conquering Hittite, the invader who imposed his will on the native population of Anatolia, while the Egyptian portraits are merely those of the aboriginal race who fought under the ruling stock at Kadesh, and were only the "cannon-fodder" of the ambition of Mutallu. This is an hard saying, to anyone who has compared the two types; and one would rather feel inclined to suggest that in the clumsy and coarse types of Carchemish we have the subject stock, Hittite now also in name, coming to the top, with the decline of the conquering Aryans, bringing into use again their clumsy native hieroglyphics, and leaving us their equally clumsy figures in place of the keener and finer stock which fought with Egypt for so long.

All this, however, is merely speculation, and may have to wait long enough either for confirmation or disproof. The one thing which does seem to be moderately certain, unless the Egyptian and Hittite sculptors were either conscious falsifiers or hopeless incompetents, is that the Hittites with whom the Egyptians fought at Kadesh are

The Amarna Age

an entirely different type from that of the Hittites of Carchemish five centuries later. At present there is no evidence to explain the difference ; we must wait on the result of further investigation for the solution of the enigma.

Fortunately, we are in a somewhat more favourable position with regard to the history of the state, at all events during its period of expansion and of greatest power. From the earlier days of what Dr. Hogarth has called the "proto-Hattic imperial period," we have a few surviving records, especially that of the king Telibunush, who informs us of the conquest by Murshilish I. of Aleppo and Babylon ! The chronicle of Telibunush is actually a very interesting document, whatever its historical value may prove to be in respect of such feats as those mentioned, which can scarcely have been more than hasty raids, if they ever were more than mere vain imaginings. His account of the growth of the Hittite state from its small beginnings is given in the most matter-of-fact fashion, with the various conspiracies which varied the monotony of palace life in Hattushash, and seated Murshilish I. on the blood-stained throne of the murdered Hattushilish I., and Hantilish in his turn on that of the murdered Murshilish, and Zidantash, Hantilish's fellow-conspirator, on that of the murdered son of Hantilish, and so on through various similar stages, until at last Telibunush himself succeeds to what he facetiously calls the "throne of his fathers," in place of Huzziash, his brother-in-law, whom he had got rid of as Huzziash had his predecessor. Apparently the life of a Hittite king in those stirring days of the growing empire would scarcely have been a "good life" from the insurance point of view.

Finally out of all the quaking bog of palace plots there

The Surrounding Nations

emerges a race of kings who appear to have a somewhat more reasonable tenure, though their dates are far from certain—Dudkhalia I. (1550 B.C.?), Hattushilish II. (1500 B.C.?), and Dudkhalia II. (1450). And with the last of these we reach what may almost be called firm ground, in comparison with what we have been traversing, for his successor, possibly his son, is the man who made the Hittite kingdom into a power to be reckoned with even by the greatest of states. Shubbiluliuma, emphatically "The Great King," among all the "great kings" who sat on the haunted throne of Boghaz-Keui, is by no means an estimable character, if judged by modern standards—a man who seemingly never took the straight road if a crooked one could be found, one of the slipperiest of customers, who delighted in intrigue for the mere pleasure of the thing, almost as much as for the profits which it brought, and who had a perfect genius for getting his accomplices to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for him, and then devouring them while they were nursing their burned fingers. Obviously a good and wary soldier when soldiering was absolutely necessary, but one who had no love for fighting unless he could attain his ends by no more delicate and devious way. Altogether a most unlovely man, with a strong touch of Mr. Pecksniff in his nature, as can be seen in his state-papers; and yet, as Alan Breck Stewart put it in a very similar case, "One would never deny he was a good chieftain to his clan."

There is no need to attempt in the meantime to unravel the tangled web of intrigue which was being woven for the best part of half a century by the Hittite spider from his far northern fastness in Cappadocia; that

The Amarna Age

will fall to be dealt with when we have to trace the results of the foreign policy, or lack of such a thing, of Akhenaten. It is enough to indicate the main lines of the tortuous policy by which Shubbiluliuma at last succeeded in making himself undisputed lord of practically the whole of North-Western Asia.

His earliest move was apparently one which he would not have made in later years when he had learned how much easier it was to cheat men out of their possessions than to fight for them. He marched against Mitanni, which was one of the chief objects of his covetousness, and met with a defeat. At least Tushratta of Mitanni, writing to Amenhotep III., states that "Teshub, the Lord, gave the enemy into my hand, and I smote him. There was none of them who returned to his own land." In evidence of all which he sends part of the Hittite spoil, a chariot and its horses, a lad and a girl, to his dear brother-in-law. One may suspect that the courageous economy of truth which is so often conspicuous in some of these old documents is not altogether wanting in Tushratta's account of his victory. Probably Shubbiluliuma's army was not entirely exterminated, if we may judge from the subsequent course of events; but the canny Hittite had learned his lesson, and in the future he preferred to let others do the fighting, while he waited till both sides were tired out, and then picked up the bone of contention and walked off with it.

In accordance with this cautious policy, his next move was to isolate Mitanni from its powerful Egyptian ally, and this he characteristically accomplishes, not by making war on the Egyptian garrisons personally, but by stirring up revolt among the Amorite vassals of Egypt in North

The Surrounding Nations

Syria. The chief of those whom he was successful in seducing from their allegiance to their suzerain were Aitakkama of Kinza, who did not prove a very satisfactory or consistent conspirator, and was always shilly-shallying and trying to face both ways, and Abdashirta and his son Aziru, two of the craftiest and least scrupulous of intriguers, who played the game against Egypt with truly remarkable cunning and duplicity, only to find in the end that they, or rather Aziru, the survivor, had been spending themselves, not in their own interests, as they had fondly imagined, but in those of the arch-schemer in Boghaz-Keui, who had no intention of seeing his tools make profit out of what he had destined for himself alone. As soon as Aziru had accomplished all the dirty work to which Shubbiluliuma had stirred him up, and Egypt's empire in North Syria was a thing of the past, the Hittite king picked a quarrel with his jackal, and duly brought him to heel, laying a heavy tribute upon him, and destroying any dreams that he may have cherished of an independent sovereignty.

Meantime he was consolidating his power in more northerly parts, bringing back to its allegiance the principality of Kissuwadna, which had revolted during the latter part of his father's reign. Tushratta of Mitanni had apparently cast a covetous eye on Nukhashshi, which was nominally a vassal state of Egypt, but whose prince Sharrupsha had aspirations after independence. The Mitannian invaded Nukhashshi "with his picked troops and his chariots; when he pressed him hard, then Sharrupsha sent his messenger to the King of Hatti: 'The servant of the King of Hatti am I; save me!'" Nothing loath, Shubbiluliuma came to the rescue, not for the sake

The Amarna Age

of Sharrupsha, but of his kingdom, drove out the Mitannian army, and secured the land. Then Sharrupsha learned the fate of "a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid," and "was undone by his own auxiliary." He had to flee for his life, leaving a more complacent successor to make the treaty with the Hittite king, which was one of Winckler's finds at Boghaz-Keui. In similar fashion the Hittite dealt with several of the smaller states, until at last the pear was ripe, and he proceeded to give the final shake to the tree.

Tushratta's position had for long been one of growing difficulty. His first success against the Hittites, if indeed it was really a success, had been followed by failure after failure. Sometimes he had been forced to see the Hittite raiding lands on the east of the Euphrates which he claimed as his own, and, either fearing or failing to bring the raider to action, had been reduced to threaten that if this went on any longer he would really be forced to raid the lands on the west side of the river. In proportion as it became evident that he was unable to protect his country against the invader, and that his great ally Egypt was now definitely ruled out of the struggle, his popularity with his own people declined, and the usual result followed. His own son Artatama raised a conspiracy against him, or, as Shubbiluliuma puts it, "waxed strong with his servants," and the unsuccessful monarch went the short and dark road which has always led, in the east, from the throne to the grave. The murderer did not take the throne himself, but set up his son Shutarna as king. "But," says the crafty old Hittite, who was quietly watching his rivals as they played the game for him, "all the land of Mitanni was going to ruin."

The Surrounding Nations

Quarrels arose between Shutarna and his brother Mattiuaza, and were no doubt encouraged and fomented by the Hittite. At last Mattiuaza fled for his life to the Hittite court, and Shubbiluliuma had gained the final position of vantage for which he had been manœuvring for half a lifetime. He declared in favour of Mattiuaza, married him to his daughter, and marched in with his army to restore to Mitanni its lawful king. Mattiuaza, of course, was just as much a king as Shubbiluliuma allowed him to be. "The cautious yet calculating policy of years was finally crowned with the attainment of the position at which he had aimed from the first, and Shubbiluliuma now as an old man reigned undisputed lord over the whole of North-Western Asia."

Nothing gives one a more complete idea of what one might call the Pecksniff side of Shubbiluliuma's character than his own record of his final dealings with Mitanni. Remember that he had been fomenting strife and making misery in Mitanni for the best part of half a century, and that if his own hands were not red with the blood of the Mitannian king, those of his agents were. This is how the benevolent old gentleman describes his share in the last act of the play: "Now when the Great King, the king of Hatti, heard of the misery of Mitanni, the king of Hatti sent palace-servants, oxen, sheep, and horses. But the Harri people had become discontented, and Shutarna with the Marianni tried to kill Mattiuaza the prince. He escaped, and before the Sun, Shubbiluliuma, the Great King, the king of Hatti, he came. The Great King spake thus: 'Teshub has rendered a decision in his favour'! Whereupon I took Mattiuaza, son of Tush-ratta, the king, into my hand, and placed him on the throne

The Amarna Age

of his father. In order that Mitanni, that great country, might not go to ruin, because the Great King's daughter had looked upon Mitanni with favour, I, the Great King, the king of Hatti, took Mattiuaza, son of Tushratta, into my hand, and gave him my daughter in marriage."

The affection of the Great King's daughter for Mitanni and its prince, so admirably calculated to further the designs of her loving father, did not blind either her or Shubbiluliuma to the need of securing her position in her new palace. The Hittite princess had no intention of playing second fiddle to any other wife whom Mattiuaza might fancy, as the Mitannian princess Gilukhipa had played second fiddle to Queen Tiy, nor had her father any intention of seeing his daughter placed in so humiliating a position. Only the first place was good enough for the daughter of the Sun. Mattiuaza was to have all reasonable liberty in the exercise of his roving fancy, but strictly within the limits which Shubbiluliuma and his prudent daughter should lay down. "And I commanded that Mattiuaza, the king's son, should be king in Mitanni, and that the daughter of the king of Hatti should be queen over Mitanni. To thee, Mattiuaza, ten women are to be allowed. But no second wife is to be advanced over my daughter. Thou shalt not send a second wife into her presence. No one shall rule in her house. Thou shalt not bring my daughter into the position of a second wife. In Mitanni she shall rule as queen." One imagines poor Mattiuaza a very much married man to the end of his days or of those of his over-lady, and perhaps sometimes wishing that the daughter of the Great King had not looked with favour upon either Mitanni or himself.

The wily old Hittite lived long enough to see the

The Surrounding Nations

crown put upon his life-work, and his possession of his ill-gotten gains secured by a treaty of peace which was negotiated between himself and the reigning Pharaoh, who may have been Horemheb, though this is not certain. This treaty is referred to by Hattushilish III., and reaffirmed in his own treaty with Ramses II. in 1272 B.C. "As for the former treaty which was in the time of Seplel (S'p'ruru, the nearest the Hittite could make his Egyptian go to Shubbiluliuma). . . . I will hold to it." His death, somewhere after 1360 B.C., really marks the beginning of the decline of the empire which he had built up with such infinite pains. His heir was his son Arnuwandash; but the usual Oriental palace struggle between the heir and his relatives ensued, and after a time Arnuwandash disappeared, and his brother Murshilish II. finally seized the sceptre, about 1355 B.C. The chief interest of his reign centres in the treaty which he made with Shunashshura of Kissuwadna, a very clear and elaborate pact establishing an alliance, offensive and defensive, between the two contracting powers. The clauses of the treaty cover all possible wars, external or civil. "Anyone starting hostility with the Sun (the Hittite king) he is surely an enemy of Shunashshura. Shunashshura shall say: 'My assembled troops are at the disposal of the Sun. With him indeed let us make war.' And anyone starting war with Shunashshura, he is the enemy of the Sun. The Sun shall say: 'My assembled troops are at thy disposal. With him let us indeed make war.' And if anyone instigates a rebellion against the Sun, I, Shunashshura, will hunt him down. And if anyone instigates a rebellion against Shunashshura, thou (the Sun) shalt surely hunt him

The Amarna Age

down." The main danger contemplated is from the Harri who are frequently mentioned, and Arzawa also comes in for attention as a possible foe. The clauses regulating the contingent which Shunashshura was bound to send to the Hittite army in warfare, and the division between the contracting parties of all spoil taken in war, are drawn with great care; but perhaps the greatest interest attaches to the sections which show us how the kings of those days guarded against the falsification of their messages in transmission, and those which delimit the border between Kissuwadna and the Hittite territory, and provide for the abolition or maintenance of the frontier fortresses. Security against falsification was secured, not by the use of a cypher, but by the duplication of the message, which was not only written on the tablet which the envoy carried, but also committed to memory by him, and delivered by word of mouth. "If the Sun send thee a letter, in which letter the record of a matter has been put down, and the messenger report (verbally) to thee about the matter which he has brought to thee: if the words of the messenger agree with the wording of the letter, then thou, Shunashshura, believe him. But if the words which thou hast from the mouth of the messenger do not correspond with the words of the letter, thou, Shunashshura, shalt not trust him; and thou shalt surely not take any harm in thy heart over these words."

Most modern of all is the section delimiting the frontier. These ancient royalties had nothing to learn from our statesmen as to the need for leaving no loopholes in treaties, by which slippery customers might escape from their obligations. "Beginning at the Sea (? the Black Sea), they shall draw the boundary and

The Surrounding Nations

divide the territory between Lamia, which belongs to the Sun, and Bituratu, which belongs to Shunashshura. The Sun shall not rebuild Lamia. They shall draw the boundary and divide the territory between Aruna, which belongs to the Sun, and Bituratu, which belongs to Shunashshura. The Sun shall not rebuild Aruna. Between Shalia, which belongs to the Sun, and Zinziluwa and Erimma, which belong to Shunashshura, they shall draw the boundary and divide the territory. The Sun shall rebuild Shalia. . . . From Luwana to Durbina runs the boundary of Shunashshura. That which is on the side of Hatti, let the Great King keep ; that which is on the side of Atania, let Shunashshura keep. Sherigga belongs to the Sun ; Luwana to Shunashshura. The Shamri river is the boundary. The Great King shall not cross the Shamri river to the side of Atania ; Shunashshura shall not cross the Shamri river to the side of Hatti." This is by no means the earliest case of frontier delimitation known, for Mesilim of Kish was called in as arbitrator between Lagash and Umma, and delimited the boundary between these two city-states before 3000 B.C. ; but it is the most complete and exact example of such a thing which has come down from ancient days.

Murshilish was succeeded by Muwatallish, whom we know better as the Mutallu with whom Ramses II. fought the battle of Kadesh. The Egyptian account of this famous battle, the greatest in which the armies of the two powers were matched during their long struggle, is often regarded as the classic example of how to gloss over the facts of an unsuccessful fight, and indeed Ramses had not much to brag of with regard to his generalship ; but the fragmentary account of the battle found at Boghaz-Keui,

The Amarna Age

if it does anything, lends support to the narrative of Ramses ; and the fact that Muwatallish was apparently deposed and murdered shortly after Kadesh indicates that the Hittites did not consider the battle to have been the triumph for their arms which some historians would have us believe it was. The words of Hattushilish in the treaty of peace leave little doubt as to the end of his brother. "Since Mutallu, the great chief of Kheta, my brother, departed after his fate." It is the unsuccessful king in the ancient east who "departs after his fate"—generally as shortly after it as can conveniently be arranged.

Hattushilish, the maker of the famous treaty, did his best to maintain the prestige of Hatti ; but, however much historians may insist upon the strict equality maintained in the terms of the treaty between the high contracting parties, the fact remains that it was Hatti, and not Egypt, which made the first overtures for peace, and also that the Hittite king did not only send his daughter down into Egypt to be the wife of Ramses, but accompanied her in person—"strange and unexpected matters," as the Egyptian record not unnaturally calls them. The fact also that, in a mutilated clause of the Boghaz-Keui version of the treaty, Hattushilish seems to ask of Ramses a favour with regard to his son points in the same direction. "And behold the Son of Hattushilish, king of Hatti . . . whatever he does . . . in the place of Hattushilish his father, after years . . . if any of Hatti commit sin . . . until he returns the chariots. . . ." Obscure as it is, the clause seems to suggest that Hattushilish had forebodings with regard to the future, and was seeking to guard against dangers which he foresaw, more or less clearly.

The Surrounding Nations

After the death of Hattushilish III. the Hittite Empire declined with startling rapidity. Dudkhalia succeeded to the throne, and was followed by his son Arnuwandash. It is probably from his reign that we have the mutilated fragment of history which hints at trouble in Aleppo and Carchemish ; but beyond that we know nothing of him. In the reign of his son, another Dudkhalia, the end apparently came. There is no Hittite record of it, and all that Ramses III. tells us is that when Asia Minor and Syria was overwhelmed by the flood of the Sea-Peoples, all that was left of the once great Hittite Empire was swept away in the torrent. "Not one stood before their hands ; from Kheta, Kode, Carchemish, Arvad, Alashia, they were wasted." The army of the invaders carried with it in its advance against Egypt a number of Hittites ; but they were only a contingent, and not even of first importance, for the Egyptian record says of the invading host that "their main support was Peleset, Thekel, Shekelesh, Denyen, and Weshesh."

So closes the empire of the Hittites, about the year 1200 B.C., as suddenly as it had begun. If we date its real rise to the accession of Shubbiluliuma in 1400 B.C., it endured for just two centuries ; but those centuries were of more importance to the history of the world than many far longer periods have been. With the subsequent renaissance of a section of the race, and the establishment for a time of a Hittite kingdom with its capital at Carchemish, we have nothing to do. The kingdom of Carchemish comes far later in time ; and though its cultural significance is great, it is historically comparatively insignificant. It was the North Cappadocian, not the North Syrian kingdom, which made history on a great scale.

With regard to the civilisation of the Hittites, we are

The Amarna Age

dependent, to a great extent, not so much, as in the case of Egypt, upon actual specimens of the equipment of life in the Hittite state, as upon the evidence given to us by the sculptures which have survived at various centres of their power. Soil, climate, and the vicissitudes of war have left very little to witness to the mode of life of the men who made the Hittite capital and empire. Apart from the literary evidence of the Boghaz-Keui writings, the monuments at the capital, at Iasily Kaya, Ferakdin, Melitene, Euyuk, Giaur Kalessi and Nymphî, all belong to the period with which we have been concerned. Of these, the oldest and most primitive are some of the sculptures at Boghaz-Keui and Euyuk, such as the Lion-Gate of the capital. These may be attributed to the period when the early kings were beginning to knit together the web of the Confederation. From the period of imperial power, we have the work at Iasily Kaya, Ferakdin, Melitene, Giaur Kalessi, and Nymphî (Kara Bel). As evidence for the appearance and equipment of the race which fought so long a battle with Egypt for supremacy, these are invaluable. They reveal an essentially Highland race, robust, heavily clad, as befitted their mountain home, with big boots, turned up at the toes. The Iasily Kaya figures, so far as can be judged from them after so many centuries of weathering, do not show a type similar to the later work at Carchemish, but rather one which has a not too far-off resemblance to the Egyptian portraits of Hittite warriors. When Hattushilish came down at the head of his army to escort his daughter into Egypt, Ramses expressed his wonder that they should have crossed the Taurus in winter when he would not have sent a messenger to Phœnicia. "What are these newcomers like! When there goes not

The Surrounding Nations

a messenger to Zahi in these days of flood on the upper heights in winter ;” and the Hittite troops are described as being “sound in limb, and long in stride.” The native sculptures certainly confirm the Egyptian impressions, and suggest a race rather fitted for the rough work of fighting and raiding than for leading the world in ways more lastingly useful than those of strife.

The art, if you can call it by so great a name, of these sculptures, confirms this impression. It is not altogether lacking in a certain rude force and fire ; but the impression left on the mind by it in general is that the Hittites were not essentially an artistic people. Iasily Kaya gives, on the whole, the most favourable impression of their capacity, but there is comparatively little on anything like the same level, and a great deal of their work is manifestly an imitation of Assyrian sculpture, and like most imitations it has lost nearly all the good qualities, and retained and emphasised all the bad ones of its model. Probably the world of art did not lose anything of great importance in the fall of the Hittite Empire ; for whatever the Hittites were able to do, the Assyrians also could do, and do a great deal better than their rivals.

Perhaps we have lost more, or rather have not yet fully realised what is to be gained, in regard to the Hittite literature. The little that has yet been offered to us in an intelligible form has suggested to some students that in the Hattic literature there is a greater tendency to the development of individual personality than in either the Egyptian or Assyrian records, where the king is the sole efficient agent in everything ; and further, that along with this there goes a sense of truth which is not met so manifestly elsewhere, save perhaps in the religious conceptions of Akhenaten in Egypt. This element in the

The Amarna Age

literature (not conspicuous, surely, in the practice of so prominent a specimen of the Hittite as Shubbiluliuma) has been traced to the Aryan element in the race, both of Hatti and Mitanni, and especially to the fact that Varuna, who in the old Aryan religion was the god who upheld the moral law, and was the source of what was called *rita*—order, moral, social, and ritual, was one of the gods who were revered by Hittites and Mitannians alike.

This is one of the astonishing results of the discovery of the tablets at Boghaz-Keui, for in the concluding sections of the treaty in which Shubbiluliuma details his agreement with Mattiuaza, a treaty which has already told us so much, among the gods appealed to by the contracting parties we meet with the names of "the gods Mitrashshil, the gods Uruwanashshil, the god Indar, the gods Nasatianna," who are none other than Mithra, Varuna, Indra, and the Nasatya Twins. Thus we have not only a confirmation of the theory that the language of the Hittites suggests for them an Indo-European origin, but also the fact that East and West Aryan meet in this treaty on the common ground of the ancient Aryan faith.

Whatever may be the ultimate decision as to the stock from which the Hittites sprang, there can be little doubt as to the Indo-European character of the Mitannians. The Mitannian chiefs, as Dr. Hall says, "were, to all intents and purposes, Indian Aryans." Probably, as we have already seen, their conquest of the land in the great bend of the Euphrates was one wave of the same incoming flood of Aryans which brought to the throne of Babylon the Kassites, whose name for the sun was *suryash* and for god *bugash*=*bhaga*. There has been considerable diversity of opinion as to whether or not Akhenaten's religious teaching was influenced by the



THE LION GATES, MYCENÆ AND BOGHAZ-KEUI (*p.* 207)
The lower picture is from Garstang's "Land of the Hittites" (Constable)

The Surrounding Nations

undoubtedly close connection between the royal house of Egypt and that of Mitanni, and the fact of the Mitannian devotion to Varuna, with his associations with the idea of truth and order, certainly offers a tempting, perhaps too tempting, link with Akhenaten's devotion to Maat, the Egyptian goddess of truth, and with his motto, "Ankh em Maat"—"Living in Truth." But whatever may be the case in this respect, there can be no doubt as to the extent of Mitannian influence throughout North Syria, and even as far south as Jerusalem. Thus we have such names in Syria as Shuwardata of Keilah, whose name means "Sun (Surya) given"; Yashdata of Taanach; and Artamanya of Zir-Bashan, in whose name the element Arta, familiar to us from the later Persian name Artaxerxes, corresponds to the old Aryan *rita*, truth or order. Finally we get at Jerusalem the name of the ruler who writes so piteously to Akhenaten, Abdi-Khiba, "Servant of the goddess Khiba"—a name which tells us that the faith of Mitanni, at least, had reached Southern Palestine. What possible influence, if any, this fact may have had upon the development of the Hebrews who later inherited the land it would be rash to attempt to say. Dr. Hall has speculated upon the possibility of Akhenaten's doctrine having survived in Palestine though it died in Egypt, and having become the seed of very important things indeed. "How do we know that the monotheistic doctrine of Heliopolis (again Moses' 'Wisdom of the Egyptians,' learnt at On) did not survive at Khinatuni, whether that was at Jerusalem itself, or possibly at Beth-shemesh, 'the House of the Sun,' and that it was not the germ from which sprang the monotheism of the Hebrews, of ourselves, and of the Muslims?"

CHAPTER VI

THE SURROUNDING NATIONS : BABYLONIANS AND ASSYRIANS

OF the other nations which were in touch with Egypt during the crisis of the Amarna Age, Babylonia and Assyria are the only ones which count for much in the development of the story ; and they can be dealt with briefly, not because of any lack of importance on their part, but just because they are so important, and have been so well known, compared with peoples like the Minoans and Hittites, as to allow a general knowledge of their history to be presumed. Of the two, Babylonia had the more ancient fame, and was supreme ruler of Western Asia when Assyria had scarcely emerged from its infancy as a state. Perhaps also the influence of Babylonia upon the history and civilisation of the world has in the long run proved to be of more importance than the dazzling, but comparatively brief, political supremacy which Assyria achieved by force of arms, when her grim empire bestrode the trembling nations of the east like a sinister colossus, and the names of Ashurnasir-pal, Shalmaneser, Sargon, Sennacherib, and Ashurbanipal were sounds of dread in every land. Babylonia's influence was different. Despite her tremendous prestige and reputation in the ancient world, she somehow scarcely ever pulled her weight as a political force, or exercised the commanding influence to which her ancient fame, her record as a civilising force, and her almost inexhaustible resources entitled her. Only at two points in her long

The Surrounding Nations

history—the one during the golden age of Ḥammurabi, and the other at the very end of her career, during the period of the Neo-Babylonian Empire of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadrezzar—does Babylon stand out as manifestly the supreme power of the ancient east; and both these periods are extremely brief, as things go in the lives of nations. The glories of the age of Ḥammurabi lasted for less than two centuries before the decline began; those of the new empire were briefer still, and within a century from the first rise of his family to power the weak descendants of Nebuchadrezzar saw the splendour of the great Babylon which he had built pass away. During the long centuries between these brief flashes of glory, the story of the great city was on the whole sufficiently inglorious. Six centuries of sluggish supineness under the alien Kassites, and then the long, dreary succession of wars with Assyria, in which brief gleams of success only accentuated the gloom of habitual defeat, and Babylon saw conqueror after conqueror from Assyria “taking the hands of Bel,” and reigning as lord in a land which was ancient before Assyria was born—all this made a sufficiently gloomy day to succeed the brilliant dawn, and to go before the splendid sunset.

The importance of Babylon to the world does not rest on her record as a political force, or on her material greatness as the typical embodiment of the pride of life, but upon something less tangible and more enduring—the contribution which she has made to the intellectual and spiritual development of the human race. Sharer, with the other great riverine kingdom of Egypt, of the glory of having given letters and literature to the world; founder of science, especially of astronomical science, in

The Amarna Age

a sense in which the Egyptian cannot claim to share her glory; perhaps above all the fountain of law, and the creator of that sense of order and security within the limits of a land, out of which spring all the developments of that business in which she led the world—commerce, banking, and sanctity of contracts between man and man: it is upon such things as these that Babylon's claim to greatness rests, and not upon her might in arms, which never was proportionate to her fame, or upon her political influence, which was oftener secondary, that of a check on Assyria, or a benevolent neutral towards Egypt, than direct, as that of a protagonist in the arena.

Probably the very reason which made Babylonia one of the earliest centres of human development, if not the earliest, was also that which militated against her steady maintenance of the primacy which she had gained. The rich alluvium of the Babylonian plain is a kind of forcing-house for humanity as well as for plant growth; but forcing-houses do not make for hardiness and endurance in the stocks which they rear. Thus Babylon gave to the world the first-fruits of knowledge and culture; but it was not in Babylonia, but in the sterner uplands of Assyria, that the Babylonian stock developed the hardier qualities which made the Assyrian more than a match for the greatest nations of the ancient world. Even a conquering stock, like the Kassites, coming in from the highlands to the fertile alluvium, very quickly lost the aggressive energy which must have characterised it originally, and settled down into the comfortable supineness which is the distinguishing mark of the Kassite in history.

Apart from her civilising mission, Babylon, up till the rise of her great First Dynasty, had not played any lead-



From Kleinmann's "Assyrian Sculptures"



From Garstang's "Land of the Hittites" (Constable)

The Surrounding Nations

ing rôle in the early history of Sumer and Akkad. Kish and Lagash, Ur and Isin and Larsa, had come far more into the limelight than she ; and when her First Dynasty began with the accession of Sumu-abum (2169-2156 B.C. ?), Isin and Larsa were still wrestling stubbornly for the supremacy in Babylonia. The successors of Sumu-abum, Sumu-la-ilum, Zabum, Apil-Sin, and Sin-muballit, steadily, on the whole, extended the influence of their city in Akkad, and prepared it for the greater rôle which it was soon to play. About 2087 B.C., when Sin-muballit came to the throne, the situation was complicated by the invasion of Akkad by the Elamite king Kudur-mabuk, who captured Larsa, and established his son Warad-Sin as king there. He and his son, Rim-Sin, whose conquest of Isin was the greatest triumph of his long and chequered reign, were the bitter rivals of the Babylonian kings ; and though Hammurabi of Babylon finally disposed effectually of Rim-Sin as a competitor for empire, it was not until the reign of his successor that the Babylonian succeeded in capturing the indefatigable old Elamite warrior, whom he burnt alive. When Hammurabi succeeded his father Sin-muballit on the throne, Babylon had still to win her place as supreme leader of the Western Semites ; and this she rapidly did under the new ruler. The success of Hammurabi in driving out the Elamite conquerors from Akkad was followed by further victories which consolidated his dominion to the west and north, so that his empire at its greatest extent included Assyria, and perhaps stretched as far as Syria.

Hammurabi's greatness as a soldier and emperor must yield, however, to his greatness as a lawgiver and

The Amarna Age

administrator, for here he is supreme in the very thing which gives to Babylon her unquestioned title to honour as one of the great sources of human civilisation. That the king was himself the originator of the 285 laws which are inscribed upon the pillar of black diorite which de Morgan found at Susa in 1901, and which is now known all over the world as the Code of Hammurabi, is in the highest degree improbable; indeed Sumerian originals for many of his laws exist: but it was Hammurabi who gathered together and codified the whole body of traditional legislation, giving it currency and unquestioned authority throughout his great empire. For thirteen hundred years his Code set the standard of law in the east, and down to the seventh century B.C. it was still studied under the title, "The Judgments of Righteousness which Hammurabi, the Great King, set up." Before a record such as this, all the achievements of mere conquerors seem very small indeed. This is not the place in which to attempt any account of the legislation of the great king; but it may be noted that while some of the laws are manifestly survivors from a primitive state of society, others are as "staggeringly modern" in their provisions, as the sanitation of the Palace of Knossos is in another way. With this goes the fact that in the one part of the ruins of Babylon where Koldewey succeeded in reaching the stratum of the First Dynasty city, there was evidence that the Babylon of 2000 B.C. was one of the earliest examples of the modern science of town-planning, with its main arteries running north and south, and crossed by other streets at right angles.

In this most ancient Babylon, also, the German excavator found evidence that the city of those early

The Surrounding Nations

days was destroyed by fire, thus confirming the account of the disaster which overwhelmed the First Dynasty, and prepared the way for the coming of the Kassite. Hammurabi's empire is another instance of what has already been noticed with regard to the supreme influence of the character and personality of the sovereign in these ancient monarchies. So soon as the strong hand of the great lawgiver was removed, his empire began to fall to pieces. Samsu-iluna, his son and successor, failed entirely to maintain the standard which his father had set, and after his troubled reign, three more reigns of steadily growing weakness, during which the land was harassed by constant raiding and partial occupation on the part of the "Kings of the Sea-Land," who rank as the Second Dynasty of Babylon, brought the end in the reign of Samsuditana, when in 1870 B.C. the great city was sacked, and its sacred images carried off by a horde of invaders from the north-west.

Who the invaders were is another matter. The Babylonian Chronicle says that "Men of the land of Khatti marched against the land of Akkad," and the view has been generally accepted that this is the first appearance of the Hittites on the stage of the eastern world. But among the tablets which Winckler found at Boghaz-Keui is one containing a copy of a letter from Hattushilish III. to Kadashman-Turgu (or K.-Enlil ?) of Babylon, in which the Hittite distinctly states that his people never conquered Babylon. "Never have the sons of Karduniash subjugated the sons of Hatti, nor have the sons of Hatti ever subjugated the sons of Karduniash." On this score the supposed Hittite raid has been denied, and it has been suggested that the unquestioned destruction of

The Amarna Age

Babylon at this time was due to the rising power of Assyria, then under the rule of Shamshi-Adad, a vigorous and aggressive king. It has to be remarked, however, that the passage in the letter of Hattushilish is not history, but rhetoric. Hattushilish is making out the best case he can for alliance between Babylon and Hatti, and it would scarcely have been diplomatic for him to admit past aggressions on the part of his race. A positive statement like that of the Chronicle, even though much later in date than that of the letter of Hattushilish, carries more weight than what one might almost call the blarney of the Hittite king. The further objection that the Hittites would not be found raiding so far from their base in Anatolia, with their flanks exposed, is of small importance. The base of the raiders, like that of all such pests, was where their army stood, living on the land it had raided, and their flanks were too fluid and mobile to worry over, as an army of modern days would worry. On the whole, the chances are that the chronicler, who was under no compulsion to invent an imaginary conquest of his land by the Hittites, was simply telling the truth, and that Hattushilish was doing the opposite, having good reasons for it. Whoever the raiders may have been, their attack broke the power of Babylon. A letter from Samsu-ditana to the authorities of Sippar shows vividly the miserable condition to which the great kingdom of Hammurabi was reduced less than a century and a half after the lawgiver's death. The gate of Sippar, says Samsu-ditana, is only to be opened to bring in the crops, in the presence of the judges of the city, "and let them not be negligent in guarding the gate." When a great city like Sippar lived in such dread and

The Surrounding Nations

terror, one may imagine the condition of the rest of the country.

Such a state of affairs was, of course, a standing temptation to all the enemies around who envied Babylon its riches and its fertile soil. Already, in the reign of Ḥammurabi's successor, Samsu-iluna, we hear of an invasion by the Kassite tribes from the western foot-hills of Elam, and though the Babylonian king claims to have defeated them, they only waited for a more favourable opportunity to renew their attempt. Their chance came during the time of misery after the Hittite raid. Sweeping down from the hills, and immensely helped, doubtless, on the Babylonian plain, by their possession of the horse and chariot, which they were the first to introduce to the warfare of the ancient east, they quickly mastered all opposition in Babylonia proper, and their chief, Gandash, became the first king of the Kassite Dynasty, which was to rule Babylon with little glory, but perhaps with considerable comfort, for nearly six hundred years. With their neighbours, the Sea-Land kings of the so-called Second Dynasty, they had somewhat more trouble; but in the reign of Kashtiliash, the third king of the Kassites, Ulam-buriash, the brother of the king, conquered the Sea-Land, and, in spite of rebellion, the whole of Babylonia was finally united under Kassite rule.

The early energy which had carried the Indo-European invaders to the throne of a state so great as Babylon, and through the longer struggle with the Sea-Landers, gradually gave way before the enervating influence of the torrid Babylonian plain, and it would be difficult to produce from the annals of any ancient state a record so

The Amarna Age

featureless as that of the six centuries of Kassite rule in Babylon. From 1746 to 1169 B.C., when their long tenure at last closes, Babylonian history is a long monotony of mediocrity, varied only occasionally by mostly unsuccessful wars of no vast moment. Yet the incomers, as has been pointed out by Dr. Campbell Thompson, must have had the knack of making themselves popular with the native race whose rulers they had displaced ; otherwise their rule could never have endured for so long. Very early they had learned that safety lay in ingratiating themselves with the native priesthood, and Gandash the conqueror began his reign by the pious restoration of the temple of Marduk (Enlil, according to Campbell Thompson), which had been damaged in the conquest of the city. His example was followed by Agum-kakrime, the fifth king of the dynasty, who brought back from Khana on the middle Euphrates the images of Marduk and his consort Sarpanitum, which had been carried off in the Hittite raid of 1870 B.C., and reinstalled them with great pomp in their shrines at E-sagila, the great temple of Babylon. Such piety was no doubt repaid by the devotion of the priesthood to kings, who, for the rest, apparently found no difficulty in accepting the native gods of Babylonia in place of their own Aryan deities. The addition of the horse to the live stock of the land must have been a great boon, not only from the warlike point of view ; and the records of the banking firm of Nabu-sharrakh, during the period from 1395 to 1242 B.C. show that the business instinct of the Babylonian had not been repressed by his new masters. The advantages of the Babylonian cuneiform script evidently made a quick appeal to the conquerors, and they dropped their own system, whatever it may have

The Surrounding Nations

been, in favour of the local character, as did also their relations in Mitanni, and their far-off cousins the Hittites in Anatolia.

It is Babylonia under these easy-going successors of the original wild raiders from the hills with which we have to do in the Amarna period ; and if the nation is happy which has no history, then Babylonia should have been happy under the Kassites, for her history is next to nothing, so far as the records go, until, in the earlier letters of the Tell el-Amarna treasure, Burraburiash II., probably the seventeenth of the long inglorious line, wakes up, and breaks the silence by his plaintive appeals for "much gold" to his brother of Egypt, "for in my brother's land gold is as common as dust."

The Assyria with which we have to do in the Amarna Age is a very different power from the magnificent and masterful savage who bestrides the ancient world five centuries later. The Assyrian giant was as yet scarcely out of infancy, was just beginning to find his feet, and was benevolently supervised by two of the greater powers, Mitanni and Babylon, who, if they had been able to have their way with the growing child, would have taken care that he never reached manhood. Fortunately for Assyria, however, perhaps rather less fortunately for the rest of the ancient world, there were other interests which conflicted with the dominance of both of the foster-parents, and secured for the young Titan the opportunity for growth which was all that he needed.

The early history of Assyria is singularly obscure and devoid of interest. We know that in the early days of Sumerian supremacy over the river-lands, Ashur, the earliest capital of the later kingdom of Assyria, was in the

The Amarna Age

possession of Sumerians, who had established in the city the normal Sumerian culture. The name of Ashur's own temple in his city is sufficient proof of this; "E-kharsaggalkurkurra" is good Sumerian, in spite of its uncouthness, and means "The House of the great exalted Mountain of the Lands"; while in Nineveh the shrine of the Mother-goddess bore the name "E-mishmish," and that at Arbela was called "E-gashan-kalama"—all Sumerian. To what state among the many rival city-states of Babylonia Ashur was subject, we do not know; but at this stage its political dependence was as close as was its cultural dependence in later days. This early Sumerian state of Ashur was swept away in the Semitic invasion which finally produced the brilliant century of Semitic supremacy under Sargon of Akkad and Naram-Sin; but Ashur has no history during the Sargonid period, and it is perhaps to the close of this period, when Semitic influence was once more at a low ebb, and the great Sumerian renaissance under Ur-engur and Dungi of Ur (2409 and 2391 B.C.) was drawing near, that we must assign the names of the first Assyrian kings, Ushpia and Kikia, who may have been Mitannians. Early tradition gives the erection of the first temple of Ashur to Ushpia, and that of the first city wall to Kikia. If these kings were Mitannian, they did not hold their position long, for by 2344 B.C. Dungi destroyed Arbela, and his son Bursin held Ashur, Arbela, and other Assyrian cities, and appointed governors of his own over them.

The second Semitic reaction, however, soon put an end to the Sumerian revival; and it was perhaps during the wars of this troubled period, just before the rise of the First Babylonian Dynasty under Sumu-abum, that



Photo W. F. Mansell

PORTRAIT-STATUE OF SENUSERT III.—GREY GRANITE,
BRITISH MUSEUM (*pp.* 118, 286)

The Surrounding Nations

Ashur for a short time gained its independence. The first king of the tiny new state was Puzur-Ashir I., and apparently the Assyrian, even in this, his earliest infancy, was beginning to show the insatiable lust for war which marked him all through ; for the third king of the line, Ilu-shuma, is recorded to have made a raid upon Babylon. The raid must have been much like a fly attacking an elephant ; but it serves to date Ilu-Shuma, even if it was unsuccessful, for his victorious opponent was Sumu-abum, which puts the Assyrian king somewhere about 2160 B.C. The names of two of the Assyrian kings of this period are worthy of notice, not for any events of importance which marked their reigns, but because of the connection which they suggest with the colony of Semites at the city of Ganesh, north of Mount Argæus, whence have come the famous Cappadocian tablets. This business colony was established before 2870 B.C., for its merchants wrote to Sargon of Akkad asking his help, and confessing naïvely that they were not men of war ; and they form a curious link between the rival nationalities of the land, for some of their names are Mitannian, they use Hittite pictographs on their seals, and the majority of their names are Assyrian, among them Shalim-ahum and Erishum, the two royal Assyrian names to which we have alluded. Whether they were originally a trading colony from Ashur, or whether they were a part of the original migration of Semites which colonised Assyria, and split off from the main body, we do not know ; but manifestly their main relationship was with Ashur.

Erelong the brief gleam of Assyrian independence faded, and the land fell under the strong hand of Hammurabi of Babylon. In the preface to his great Code,

The Amarna Age

the king tells us that he "restored to the city of Ashur its grace-giving *lamassu*," the human-headed bull which so often guards the palace-gates in an Assyrian city, and also how he "made bright the face of Ishtar in E-mish-mish of Nineveh." By 1870 B.C. the glory of the First Dynasty had been eclipsed, and no doubt Assyria, then under Shamshi-Adad I., took the opportunity of her overlord's weakness to assert her claim to independence. It seems rather unlikely, however, that we should accept Dr. Olmstead's suggestion that the sack of Babylon was due, not to the Hittites, but to Assyria, and that it was Shamshi-Adad who carried away to Khana on the middle Euphrates the images of Marduk and Sarpanitum. The evidence for either view is not very decisive; but for the Assyrian conquest it is practically invisible. It was Shamshi-Adad, however, who first began to make Ashur a great city, and to him are due the first important temple of the name-god of the place, and also temples to Shamash and Sin.

Shamshi-Adad is the only king of the period who is anything more than a name to us. His line closed apparently about the same time as the Kassite Dynasty began its rule in Babylon; and the kings of the line which followed, Pan-Ninua, Shamshi-Adad II., Ishme-Dagan II., and the rest of them, are even more shadowy than their predecessors. Save for the fact that Shamshi-Adad II. seems to have raided as far as Syria, we know nothing of the history of Assyria between 1750 and 1550 B.C., when Ashur-nirari I. built a new wall round his capital, and was busy with palaces and temples. Then suddenly the curtain rolls up, and we find the stage set with all the figures of the new drama of the Amarna Age.

The Surrounding Nations

In the first stage of the new development, Assyria played a part in no way hinting at the greatness of the position which she was destined to attain. It is now, during the second campaign of Thothmes III., that we come upon the first intercourse between Ashur and Egypt, in the shape of the entry in the annals of the great king—"The tribute of the chief of Assur," with a list of the valuable articles sent, supplemented by a second list. Of course, there is no need to assume from such an entry that Assyria actually became tributary to Egypt at this period. The real meaning to attach to the word is that the gifts of Assyria were a tribute to the Assyrian's sense that Thothmes was the power to be feared and conciliated, perhaps with a view to future emergencies, which might make Egypt a convenient helper against the dominance of Mitanni. They certainly did not mean that Puzur-Ashir IV., if it were he who sent the embassy, regarded Thothmes as his suzerain. At the same time, it is ridiculous to talk, as does a recent historian of Assyria, of the Assyrian king being "bitterly resentful had he known that Thutmose had been mean enough to speak of his 'tribute.'" Assyria at this point of her history was not in a position to be bitterly resentful of any such interpretation of her gifts. She was a very second-rate power indeed, more or less subject to Mitanni, and soon to be rather more than less subject; while in the background Babylon also had ancient, though somewhat shadowy and undefined, claims to overlordship. At this time Puzur-Ashir and Burraburiash I. of Babylon "swore an oath, and established their boundaries in friendly agreement"; but all the same, Babylon held herself the superior of the younger state, as we see from

The Amarna Age

the later letter of Burraburiash II., complaining to Akhenaten of the insolence of the Assyrians, "my vassals," in attempting to establish independent relations with Egypt.

Whatever may have been the object of the embassy of the "chief of Assur" to Thothmes, it apparently did not produce much improvement in the position as regards Assyria's inferiority to Mitanni. There was evidently a bitter spirit of hostility between the two powers at this time, which may possibly have arisen from the fact that the earliest rulers of Ashur appear to have been of Mitannian origin, and that Mitannian influence had been superseded by the Semitic seizure of the land. Possibly, however, it came more naturally from the simple fact that Mitanni was the power in possession, perhaps not quite so sure of herself as she had been, while Assyria was the power which was conscious of growing strength, sure that she had the future in her hands, and determined to oust her rival. Whatever the reason, the tension between the powers resulted, about 1450 B.C., in an open rupture. The Mitannian king, Shaushshatar, invaded Assyria, and carried away, "by his might and power," the palace doors of gold and silver, which he set up in his own palace at Washshukkani. Despite this humiliation, the kings of Assyria continued their independent relations with Egypt, and we know from the begging-letter of Ashur-uballit to Amenhotep IV. both that his father, Ashur-nadin-akhe, had received a present of 20 talents of gold from Egypt, and that he confidently looked for a similar present to be made to himself. Akhenaten's father, the Assyrian king explains, had also given 20 talents of gold to the King of Hanigalbat (Mitanni), and surely he, Ashur-uballit, was as deserving

The Surrounding Nations

an object as "that Hanigalbatian king." All which did not prevent the King of Mitanni, the unlucky Tushratta, from maintaining his grip on Assyria up to the time of the death of Amenhotep III. to such an extent that, as we have seen, he was able to take the sacred image of Ishtar of Nineveh out of her temple there, and send it down into Egypt for the healing of his dear brother and banker Amenhotep.

But the stars in their courses were fighting against Mitanni and for Assyria. We may be quite sure that the plots which Shubbiluliuma so craftily wove around Mitanni did not contemplate in the least the aggrandisement of Assyria; but the progressive weakening of Mitanni which was their result gave the lesser power the exact opportunity which she needed. The first consequence of the confusion which ensued upon the murder of the unfortunate Tushratta was that Shutarna, the son of Artatama the murderer, began to look around him for helpers in the inevitable struggle with his rival Mattiuaza, and his supporter the Hittite king. Assyria and Alshe, his nearest neighbours, seemed the likeliest allies, and Shutarna did not stick at trifles to obtain their friendship. We may let the indignant Mattiuaza speak for himself in description of the enormities which Shutarna committed, not the least, of course, being the fact that whatever was given to Assyria or Alshe was taken from Mattiuaza. "Thus Mattiuaza, son of Tushratta," to use his own introduction of himself: "When I, Mattiuaza, son of Tushratta, king of Mitanni, handed over (a beautiful euphemism) to Shutarna, son of Artatama, the rulership of Mitanni, Artatama the king, his father, did what was not right. His palace, together with his possessions, he

The Amarna Age

wasted ; to give them to Assyria and Alshe, he wasted them. Tushratta, the king my father, built a palace, filled it with treasures (largely from 'my brother' in Egypt, no doubt) ; but Shutarna destroyed it, he overthrew it. The (regalia?) of the king, headbands of silver and of gold, vessels of silver from the 'house of vessels' he smashed, and to none of the (friends?) of his father and his brother did he give anything. But towards the Assyrian, the servant of his father, who used to bring the royal tribute to him, he became friendly, and his treasures he gave him as a gift. Thus Mattiuaza, son of Tushratta: The doors of silver and gold which Shaushshatar, the king, the father of my grandfather, had taken from Assyria by his might and power, and had set them up in his palace in Washshukkani, then Shutarna in his meanness gave them back to Assyria. All sorts of precious vessels of silver and gold he gave to Alshe. And the palace of the king of Mitanni, together with its wealth and treasure, he wasted, with the dust he mixed it."

A scandalous chronicle indeed! Only one has to remember that Shutarna was gambling for a kingdom and for his own precious life, and that it does not pay to be niggardly in such circumstances ; also that Mattiuaza does not tell us what he himself gave to Shubbiluliuma, King of Hatti, besides marrying a Hittite princess and giving himself over to Hittite petticoat government, to secure his own ends. Assyrian or Hittite, it mattered very little to whom the treasures of Mitanni went in the end, or, indeed, whether Shutarna or Mattiuaza were the puppet who sat on the propped-up throne of a tottering kingdom. The Assyrian to whom Shutarna was so generous, for value received

The Surrounding Nations

or hoped for, was no less a man than Ashur-uballit, whom we have already heard begging Akhenaten for gold, and who was "the first of the men who created the Assyrian empire." In the meantime his venture in the direction of the expansion of his kingdom at the expense of distracted Mitanni was unsuccessful. The old spider up in Boghaz-Keui had no mind to share the spoils of his lifetime of intrigue with any upstart Assyrian; and Assyria was not yet strong enough to stand against the menace of the Hittite army. When Shubbiluliuma invaded Mitanni to restore Mattiuaza, Assyria was either defeated or withdrew. A mutilated passage in Mattiuaza's version of the agreement between himself and Shubbiluliuma suggests that Ashur-uballit saw it to be his interest to crave for peace.

With the Assyrian, however, such a withdrawal was only *pour mieux sauter*. Time was on his side. Shubbiluliuma was getting old, and Ashur-uballit was young; and before the Hittite kingdom there lay a difficult period, in which, what between discord at home, and adventure and strife in the more southerly part of the Hittite sphere of influence, the "Sun of Hatti" had other things to attend to than the expansion of Assyria. Ashur-uballit seized the precious chance offered to him by the pre-occupation of his only serious rival. His character and his diplomacy seem to have been modelled to a great extent upon Shubbiluliuma, whose success the young king had no doubt watched with envious eyes. He himself was to attain a success fairly comparable with that of his pattern, and to lay the foundations of a much more lasting empire. "A few square miles about Ashur was its extent at his accession; at its close (*i.e.*, the close of his reign—

The Amarna Age

style is not Professor Olmstead's strong point) Assyria had won recognition as one of the great powers."

Ashur-uballit's disappointment in Mitanni did not prove to be of an enduring character. Erelong he had succeeded in absorbing quietly the greater part of the once-great kingdom which in earlier days had so humbled the pride of his own race. His attentions to Egypt, as we have seen, were marked with deep disapproval by Burra-buriash of Babylon. The Babylonian's protest against Assyria's claim to rank as an independent sovereign state was, however, a mere futility unless he were prepared to fight to maintain what otherwise was no more than a pious opinion; and the Kassites of the later stage never fought if they were allowed a decent excuse for sleeping in peace. Such an excuse he quickly found in the marriage of the daughter of Ashur-uballit, Muballitasherua, either to himself or to his son Kara-khardash (possibly Kara-indash). The son of this union, Kadashman-Kharbe, was by his death to afford to Ashur-uballit, now growing a very old man, what must have been one of the sweetest moments of his busy and adventurous life. The mob of Babylon rose in revolt against the young half-Assyrian king, and Kadashman-Kharbe was duly disposed of as unpopular eastern kings are generally dealt with. A man named Nazi-bugash, "the son of a nobody," was put on the throne in his stead. Ashur-uballit could scarcely have looked for a better opportunity. It was exactly a case of Shubbiluliuma, Shutarna, and Máttiuaza over again, with this additional advantage, that the pretender to the Babylonian throne had no title as a member of the royal house, as Shutarna had. The old Assyrian king marched at once upon Babylon, first of

The Surrounding Nations

the long succession of Assyrian kings who were to repeat the attempt, and to find that Babylon was comparatively easy to capture, but almost impossible to hold ; and with apparently little difficulty he overcame all opposition, and placed on the throne his great-grandson Kurigalzu III.

After such a triumph, Ashur-uballit might sing his "Nunc dimittis." Indeed it has been given to few kings to see so complete a reversal of the conditions under which he began his reign, or such a triumph of his own ideals. In his early days he had to submit to the knowledge that the King of Babylon called him "my vassal" ; in his extreme old age he found himself in the position of giving a king to Babylon, and dictating to his former suzerain. The old man must have rolled the triumph as a sweet morsel under his tongue. His successors, Enlil-nirari and Arik-den-ilu, on the whole maintained Assyria in the position to which the ability and persistence of Ashur-uballit had raised her ; and, by the end of the Amarna period, Adadnirari I. and Shalmaneser I. are beginning the time of strenuous expansion which was to bring Assyria to the very forefront among the great nations of the eastern world. It was the time of strife when Seti I. and Ramses II. of the XIXth Dynasty were trying manfully to regain for Egypt the lost Asiatic empire which Akhenaten had sacrificed for an idea ; and the aggressive Assyrian kings found such a time, in which both the Hittites and Egyptians were fully occupied with their fatal struggle, an ideal one for the advancement of the interests of Assyria. The growing nation looked on, *tertius gaudens*, while its rivals bled one another white, not forgetting to pick up, on every opportunity, some

The Amarna Age

unconsidered trifle which the others were too busy to attend to.

With the later Assyria, however, the Assyria of the grown empire, we have nothing to do. In the period of our story the triumphs of the northern kingdom still lay far in the future. The time was coming when the Assyrian king could truly say, as the Hebrew prophet pictures him saying : " I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man : and my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people : and as one gathereth eggs that are forsaken, have I gathered all the earth ; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or chirped " ; but as yet it was Egypt and Hatti that were the great nations in everyone's eye, with Babylon, big but sluggish, a bad third to them. And we have now to see how the idealism of one man—a magnificent folly, perhaps, but a folly none the less—changed the whole balance of power in the east, and how the stubbornness of the two great rivals completed the work of preparing the way, not for a prince of peace, as Akhenaten had fondly hoped to be, but for the incarnation of the spirit of war in the person of Assyria.

CHAPTER VII

THE NEW SUPREME JOVE OF THE ANCIENT EAST—

AMENHOTEP IV

THE death of Amenhotep III. (1375 B.C.), while it did not actually produce a new situation in the world of the ancient east, was one of those events which, like the shaking of a saturated solution, cause the tendencies which have been working more or less in quiet, perhaps for years, to crystallise and take definite form, so that what was latent now becomes manifest. It may very well be that the Egyptian Empire was a thing which was too artificial and too slightly compacted to endure for very long ; after all, Egyptian dominion in Syria and Naharina was an alien thing, and however gentle the pressure of the yoke may have been, still it was there, and was manifestly resented : but it was the accession of the new king, and then the astonishing characteristics of his faith, with their reactions on Egyptian rule within the empire, which gave to the restless spirits among the Egyptian vassals, and to the jealous outsiders, such an opportunity of compassing the overthrow of Egyptian power as they may have often longed for, but could scarcely have expected. We have already seen, from our survey of the various states involved, the general lie of the international situation. Roughly speaking, there was a cluster of apparently not unequally matched states, none of them, at least, so manifestly superior to the others as to compel submissiveness on their part, each one bitterly jealous of its neigh-

The Amarna Age

bour, and all on the look-out for any chance of self-aggrandisement. Egypt rose head and shoulders above any of them, and their only deference, and perhaps also their main jealousy, was towards her.

The whole eastern world was a boiling pot, and what new figure of destiny was to emerge from the magic brew as master of the nations was still unknown. Apparently the one stable thing in the whole situation was the power of Egypt ; and though we now know differently, and can see what was hidden from the men of the time, it must probably have seemed to most men that the future lay with the great power of the Nile Valley. No other state was equal to the task of dominating the situation and imposing its will upon all the turbulent and conflicting elements. Babylonia was too sluggish ; Assyria, alive enough, was but in its infancy as a state, and could scarcely look for more than tolerance in the circle of the great powers ; Crete was out of the circle by position, and besides, though she did not know it, was on the verge of her own doom ; the Hittites were only as yet feeling for a grip and a sure stance for the wrestle which lay ahead, and Mitanni had not got the staying power, and was visibly growing distressed and falling behind. All depended upon Egypt ; and the thing which gave an edge to the whole situation was that Egypt's supremacy, while manifest enough, was by no means so overwhelming as to make the issue a foregone conclusion.

Everything depended upon the type of man whom she could produce to be her leader, and to direct the great resources of the empire. With a great man of the right type, or even merely a competent man at her head, Egypt's margin of superiority would probably have proved

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

sufficient to prolong her dominion for several generations, perhaps even for a century or two. If she could have produced another Thothmes III. at this point, the whole history of the ancient world might have been changed. Mitanni would have been saved from disintegration and absorption, and either buttressed up for another period of her work as a buffer-state, or definitely associated with the Egyptian Empire; the Hittites might have been held back before their descent from the north had gathered momentum, and might have been confined to what, after all, was their true sphere, the highlands of Anatolia; and, above all, the development of Assyria might have been retarded for generations, which would surely have been so much gained for the good of the world at large. Even a lesser man than a Thothmes III. might have served the turn, and an Amenhotep II. would probably have proved sufficient to tip the balance in favour of the continuance of Egyptian domination. As yet the Hittites and Assyrians were by no means committed to a definite attempt to overthrow the Egyptian Empire in Asia. That, of course, was the ultimate end towards which they were moving, whether they were conscious of it or not; but so far their movements had only been tentative. They were simply seeing how far it was safe to go; neither of them had put out a hand which could not be swiftly withdrawn again, and a prompt challenge on the part of Egypt would doubtless have convinced them that the time for their venture was not ripe.

Egypt duly produced her great man, a man who in some respects is the greatest whom she ever produced. His claim to greatness is of course angrily denied by some, just as it is stoutly maintained by others; but a

The Amarna Age

man about whom grave historians are still fighting with vigour, not to say heat, after he has been dead for 3,300 years can scarcely be denied his right to a place in the circle of the world's great men. His greatness may not be of the type which appeals to his critics ; but at least no one can ignore him, and his harshest judges are still, in their own way, adding another stone and another to the cairn which will keep his name alive. More has been written about this man during the last forty years than about all the rest of the kings of the ancient east put together ; and while that is by no means an infallible proof of his greatness, it proves at least beyond question that he has managed to impress himself upon the modern mind as the most interesting figure of antiquity. Most great men have to be content with a good deal less than that.

Unfortunately his greatness, if such a quality be conceded to him, was of a type exactly the reverse of that which was needed by the situation. Instead of a ruthless soldier who would say, "Hitherto, but no further," to Hittite or Assyrian ambition, she produced a man who, so far as we can judge across nearly three and a half millenniums, seems to have been the world's first pacifist ; instead of a shrewd, hard-headed statesman capable of meeting with an equal guile the guile of the old intriguer in Boghaz-Keui, she produced an idealist dreamer, who actually believed that men were meant to live in truth and to speak the truth. Of course, such a phenomenon at the head of the Egyptian Empire was fatal to all Egypt's claims to supremacy in the ancient world. The power of Egypt was either not used at all, or was used in a fashion utterly opposed to the practical

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

needs of the situation. The whole position for the few years of the new reign can be roughly but not inadequately presented in a single piquant contrast of personalities—Shubbiluliuma against Akhenaten.

All the forces making against Egypt's supremacy may be summed up in the grey old schemer of Boghaz-Keui—an old spider in his lair, with the strands of his web reaching out into far lands, and entangling victims of all races, while he sat in the centre, sensitive to the least quiver which might mean a change of policy, worldly-wise and war-wise, absolutely ruthless, and supremely confident in his own ability to make the whole world come round to him in the long run, endowed withal with the unfathomable patience to which delay means nothing if the end is at last attained. And on the other hand you have the young Egyptian king, little more than a boy, scarcely understanding all the weight of the responsibility for other lands and other men's lives to which he had fallen heir, and therefore careless of it in comparison with the great new ideas, which had been growing up in his mind, ever since his first mental awakening, of a god who should not be the lord of any single race or land but of all the earth, intangible and invisible, or at least incapable of being represented, but infinitely merciful, beneficent and loving towards all men. It was the old story of the inevitable clash between two fundamentally opposite ideals, the worldly and the unworldly ; and for the time it had the inevitable result, and the child of this world proved wiser in his generation than the child of light.

Amenhotep IV., who was destined to a fate so tragic, and to an influence upon the fortunes of his land so disastrous, was, as we have seen, the son of Amenhotep III.

The Amarna Age

and his favourite wife Tiy. His birth came late in the married life of his parents, for though Queen Tiy had borne several daughters, it was not till about the twenty-fifth or twenty-sixth year of their union that the royal couple were gladdened by the birth of a son. By that time we may presume that the early vigour of Amenhotep III. had faded, and that if he was not already feeling the approach of that premature old age which cut him off in the midst of his days, he was at least well content to leave the more strenuous aspects of kingship in the hands of his more energetic wife, while he enjoyed its more ornamental and pleasurable functions. There can be little doubt that during the latter part of his reign, at all events, while it was Amenhotep who wore the Double Crown, it was Tiy who ruled; and probably the easy-going, good-natured king was quite content with the arrangement. Tiy's supremacy over her husband's mind leaves little question as to where we are to look for the chief influence in the upbringing of her young son. His vivid, capable mother must have been almost everything to the young prince, and increasingly so as the years went on, and his father gradually sank into the lethargy of premature decay.

Was there a power behind Queen Tiy, as she was the power behind the throne? It is a point on which one is tempted to speculate, especially when one recalls the masterful profile of the Queen's father Iuaa, Master of Horse in the royal household, and Priest of Min. Here, it seems, is the face of a man who was capable of conceiving such great ideas as those for which his grandson risked and lost an empire, and who had the force of character to ensure of their being carried into effect. Iuaa may have been partly responsible for the fanaticism

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

with which his descendant took up the new ideas of divinity, only partly at the most, for there were many influences tending in the same direction ; but one suspects that if he had lived long enough to influence the actual execution of the religious reforms, there would have been more practical wisdom, if no less thoroughness, in the working out of the scheme, and the enemies of the Egyptian Empire would have been taught that Egypt's change of faith had not shortened her arm or weakened her grasp. All this, however, is merely speculation, and may be as devoid of any ground in reality as some of the other fancies which have been woven around the career of the heretic king.

Less doubtful is the inference that, with a father sinking into lethargy and an active and clever mother, and with the prodigious harem of Amenhotep III. as his environment, the prince's upbringing must have been dominated by the feminine element, and that element to a large extent foreign. Two at least of his father's secondary wives were Mitannian princesses. The elder of them, Gilukhipa, brought down with her into Egypt a train of 317 maids of honour, while her niece, Tadukhipa, being the daughter of the actually reigning King of Mitanni, is not likely to have been less amply provided with attendants ; and while, no doubt, many of these noble foreign ladies were soon married to Egyptian nobles, there must still have remained a Mitannian feminine influence about the palace sufficient to give an unmistakable tone of its own to the environment of the crown prince. The character of the Mitannian influence would not be weakened, but rather strengthened, by the presence in the harem of a Babylonian princess or prin-

The Amarna Age

cesses, for Kassite and Mitannian were of the same stock. Later we shall have to return to the question of whether or no the Mitannian influence had any share in the development of the new doctrine of Atenism ; meanwhile it is sufficient to remark that, in the face of the fact of this solid block of Mitannian personality entrenched in the very citadel from which the new faith eventually came forth, it seems ridiculous to deny the possibility of a Mitannian leaven, though it would be equally ridiculous to attempt to define its extent or its efficacy. At least we can say this with certainty, that at a period of its history when Egypt was most urgently in need of a Pharaoh trained in the camp and the council-chamber after the fashion of the school of Thothmes III., fate gave to the land, to its disaster, a boy bred in the half-lights and dimly seen facts of an Oriental harem, where long views and a practical knowledge of men and things are impossible, where the power of the throne, properly guided, of course, by its womenkind, seems irresistible, and where no reckoning is ever made of the final factor which has shipwrecked so many fine schemes, religious and social—the stubbornness and dislike of change which are characteristic of the average human being, on whom all kingdoms finally rest. The tutors of the young Pharaoh may have had the most noble thoughts and the most benevolent ideas in the world ; but because of what they were, they could not, or at least they did not, instil into the mind of their royal charge the practical wisdom, and the readiness and ability to meet and to make allowance for the prejudices and antipathies of the average man, without which the idealist, with the noblest aims in the world, remains no more than an unpractical and

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

impossible doctrinaire, and may become a menace to all that is good in things as they are, in his vain strivings after things as he fancies they should be. It would perhaps be too much to say that Amenhotep IV. failed because, alike in his merits and his defects, he was a characteristic product of petticoat government ; but there would be a considerable element of truth in the statement all the same. Much of the impracticability of the young king—and after all it was this which chiefly wrecked his work—may safely be traced to his early environment, which prevented him from that salutary contact with hard facts and hard men which is part of the necessary equipment of the man who is to be of any practical service to the world, and to the preponderating influence of a crowd of adoring women, always the surest ground for the growth of a faith, who would assure the king of his infallibility, and of the triumph of his most impossible schemes.

The problem which confronted the young Pharaoh on his accession was one sufficiently formidable to have taxed the strength and wisdom of the greatest of his ancestors. Thirty years before, or even twenty, it might have been handled with comparative ease, if Amenhotep III. had been a little less devoted to pleasure, and a little more to duty. Abdashirta, Aziru, and the rest of the motley company of disloyal vassals who were nibbling away at the Egyptian dominions in the north, were paltry enemies compared with those with whom the Egyptian Pharaohs of the early XVIIIth Dynasty had had to deal in the making of the empire ; nor were even their backers, the Hittites, so formidable at this stage as to rouse any real apprehension as to the result of a vindication of

The Amarna Age

Egyptian rights. One prompt example made of a disloyal state or ruler, such an example as Thothmes III. would have made before his enemies had time to realise that the dreaded Manakhbiria was on the march, would probably have kept the Amorites loyal and the Hittites respectful for at least a generation, and even when the work needed to be repeated, it would have been all the easier because it was a repetition. Amenhotep, however, had been too busily employed hunting bulls and lions and accumulating Asiatic wives to take the strenuous path which would have led to safety for his empire. Disloyalty and lawlessness had been steadily growing, as we have seen, in the northern part of the empire; and the work which might have been done with one hand twenty years ago was now sufficiently difficult to tax the resources of the kingdom to the utmost. It was entrusted to a boy of perhaps eleven years, delicate and sickly in body, who already cherished in his over-developed brain ideas of divinity and man's relationship to divinity in comparison with which the fate of empires and kingdoms, to say nothing of individuals, was a trifle lighter than air.

In spite of the much earlier maturity of eastern manhood and womanhood, one cannot believe that the young Amenhotep, at eleven years, was the actual ruler. His mother was well accustomed to discharge duties of state, as she had always been associated with her husband in the government from the earliest days of their wedded life; and there need be no question of Tiy's responsibility for at least the first two or three years of the new reign. The position which she occupied is sufficiently made clear by the words of Tushratta of Mitanni in the early letters of his correspondence with the new king.



BUST OF NEFERTITI—PAINTED LIMESTONE, BERLIN (*pp.* 242-3, 293)

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

He indicates that while he writes to the king, he expects Amenhotep to consult his mother about the facts mentioned. "As to all the words of Nimmuria (Neb-maat-ra, Amenhotep III.), thy father, which he wrote to me, Tiy, the Great Wife of Nimmuria, the Beloved, thy mother, she knows all about them. Enquire of Tiy, thy mother, about all the words of thy father which he spake to me" (K. 29). "All the words together, which I discussed with your father, Tiy, thy mother, knows them all; and no one else knows them" (K. 28).

Another influence which was probably of considerable importance was that of the boy-king's nurse, also named Tiy, "The great nurse, nourisher of the god, adorer of the king," as she is called in the inscription in her husband's tomb at el-Amarna. She was married to a priest of comparatively humble rank ("Divine Father") in the hierarchy. Probably in virtue of his relationship to the king's nurse, Ay was appointed to several offices at court, and became "Fan-bearer on the right of the king, master of all the horses of His Majesty, his truly beloved scribe"; but the influence of this couple was not limited by the comparatively insignificant offices which they held. It was maintained throughout the reign, and in the troubled times after the death of the king, Ay, who must by that time have been getting well up in years, found a way to seat himself on the throne, after the ephemeral reigns of Smenkh-kara and Tutankhamen. That he did so has suggested sinister suspicions as to his relationships with the royal family which he professed to serve, and the genuineness of his acceptance of the new faith of which he was for a time a devoted adherent; but there is really no evidence of any disloyalty on his part, save the fact

The Amarna Age

that he picked up the sceptre when there was no one else to grasp it, while, if he proved a time-server with regard to religion, he was no worse than ninety-nine out of every hundred of the devotees of the new faith. Without, however, imputing any wilfully evil influence to Ay and his wife, one can imagine that the guidance of a priest and a nurse, coupled with that of his mother, was not perhaps the best thing for a young king whose situation demanded rather the wisdom of proved men of the world, and the prompt decision of trained soldiers.

The immediate entourage of the young Pharaoh was completed, at a very early date in the reign, by his marriage to one of the most graceful figures in the long line of Egyptian queens—the princess Nefertiti. No face has become more familiar of late years to the student of ancient history than that of this girl who was destined to so strange a fate. The two Amarna heads, that in brown sandstone and that in painted limestone, both now in the Berlin Museum, are among the supreme masterpieces of that art of portrait-sculpture in which the Egyptian artist was unmatched in the ancient world; and both of them, but perhaps especially the latter, set before us a personality of a singularly attractive and gracious type. The portraits of other queens of romance, such as Cleopatra and Mary of Scotland, are apt to leave one wondering where the charm came in about which all men raved; but no one could question for a moment the beauty of Nefertiti. Features of exquisite modelling and delicacy, the long graceful neck of an Italian princess of the Renaissance, and an expression of gentleness not untouched with melancholy, make up the presentation of a royal lady about whom we should like to know a great

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

deal, and actually know almost nothing. Even her nationality is as yet in dispute. It has been maintained that she is indeed the Tadukhipa of Mitanni whom Amenhotep III. added to his harem in his declining days, and whom his son took over, according to custom, on his accession, the name Nefertiti being given to her, in place of her unfamiliar Mitannian name, when she came to Egypt. However possible such an arrangement may be—and there can be no doubt that Tadukhipa, the young widow of Amenhotep III., was duly married to Amenhotep IV.—no one who has compared the portrait busts of Nefertiti with the portraits of her husband, and especially with the Amarna limestone bust of him in the Berlin Museum, can believe that she was Tadukhipa. Feature by feature the two sets of portraits not only resemble each other, but speak beyond question of the very closest blood-relationship between their originals; and the point is settled by an inscription quoted by Legrain, which speaks of Nefertiti as the daughter of Queen Tiy. The titulary of the new queen asserts her position as queen in her own right in a fashion which is confined to queens who were of the pure solar stock of Egypt, and we must conclude that Nefertiti was full sister to her husband—a relationship which, however shocking it may seem to us, was regarded as a perfectly normal one by the Egyptians, to whom it was sanctified by the marriage of Isis to her brother Osiris. The young princess can scarcely have been older than eight or nine when she was married to her brother—a pair of babes indeed in a very dark wood.

The opening days of the new reign did not promise anything very revolutionary. Whatever may have been the intentions of the queen-mother, who at this stage was

The Amarna Age

the real ruler of the land (and in view of the incidents narrated in the later part of the story of her husband's reign it is almost certain that she was largely the moving spirit in the religious innovations), she was wise enough, at all events, to allow things to take their normal course till such time as her son should be firmly seated upon the throne, and not to shock public opinion by any sudden departure from the time-honoured custom. Accordingly the new Pharaoh's titulary was proclaimed very much in the form to which Egypt had been accustomed for centuries. One of the earliest records of the reign gives it as follows (Quarry inscription at Silsileh): "Mighty Bull, Lofty of Plumes; Favourite of the Two Goddesses; Great in Kingship in Karnak; Golden Horus; Wearer of Diadems in the Southern Heliopolis; King of Upper and Lower Egypt, *High-Priest of Harakhti-Rejoicing-in-the-Horizon, in His Name, 'Heat-which-is-in-Aten'*"; Neferkheperura-Uah-en-ra; Son of Ra, Amenhotep, Divine Ruler of Thebes; Great in His Duration, Living for ever and ever; Beloved of Amen-Ra, Lord of Heaven, Ruler of Eternity."

In the whole of this lengthy titulary, which is almost entirely of the consecrated type, there is nothing which need shock the most orthodox Egyptian, and nothing which need have caused any surprise, save the one short passage italicised, in which the Pharaoh, who of course was naturally the supreme High-Priest of every god in his realm, claims expressly the High-Priesthood of one special aspect of the Sun-god Ra. "High-Priest of Harakhti-Rejoicing-in-the-Horizon, in His Name, 'Heat-which-is-in-Aten.'" The orthodox worshipper of Amen could console himself with the fact that the king styled himself

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

"Beloved of Amen"; the devout servant of Ra could find satisfaction in the fact that his ancient god was recognised in the titles, "Son of Ra" and "Wearer of Diadems in the Southern Heliopolis"; only those who had been watching closely the tendencies of the court during the latter years of the reign of Amenhotep III. could see, either with apprehension or with joy, according to their predilections, that the prominence given to that aspect of the Sun-god which the Egyptian expressed in the name "Harakhti-of-the-Horizon" was the beginning of the twilight of the gods which was soon to overwhelm the whole Egyptian Pantheon.

Meanwhile the course of events, both at home and abroad, was comparatively smooth and untroubled. In the Asiatic part of the empire there was no rebellion such as had often in times past marked the accession of a new Pharaoh. It might have been better in the long-run for Egypt if revolt had openly broken out at a time when the pacifist tendencies of the new ruler were still undeveloped, and the old tradition of the strong hand and the swift blow as the best cure for Asiatic unrest had not quite died out. But things were quiet for a little in Asia. The turbulent princelets and the ambitious kings held their hands and sat still for a while, till they should see what manner of man was the new supreme Jove, and how far it might be safe to go with His Divinity. We get an interesting glimpse into the customs of the ancient courts and the amenities of intercourse between the sovereigns of the east in the letters which pass between the various potentates of Asia and the new Pharaoh, when the official notice of his father's death and his accession has been communicated to them.

The Amarna Age

Tushratta of Mitanni, as was to be expected from the closeness of his relationships with both the dead and the living Pharaoh, is most effusive in his lamentation for the death of his great kinsman, and in his aspirations after the love of the new king. Indeed it is quite a touching picture which he draws of his grief and the consolation which came to him in his sorrow at the thought that his dead friend had left a son to succeed him. "When Nimmuria had gone to his destiny . . . I wept on that day. I sat unmoving through the midst of that night; neither meat nor drink gave me any enjoyment, and I had sorrow. . . . If only my brother whom I loved and who loved me were alive again! . . . But when Napkhuria, the mighty son of Nimmuria by Tiy, his consort, the Great One, wrote to me saying, 'I have succeeded to the kingly authority,' then said I, 'Nimmuria is not dead! Now hath Napkhuria, his mighty son by Tiy, his consort, the Great One, sat him down in his place, and he will not suffer anything to be changed from its place where it was before.'" These highly proper and touching sentiments are followed, more than once, by the expression of the wish that the friendship between the two thrones may be ten times greater now than in the days of Amenhotep III. Tushratta would not be Tushratta, however, if his tenderest letter closed without reference to the thing which lay nearer to his heart than even his dear friend in Egypt, and, like the Walrus, "with tears and sobs" he still contrives to be mindful of the main chance, and to remind his dear brother that "in my brother's land gold is as common as dust." Tushratta's letters at this time are so delightful as to make it a sad thought that he was destined to be cut off in the midst of his days, leaving so many more unwritten!

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

Burraburiash of Babylon is equally solicitous that the ancient friendship between the two palaces shall be maintained between himself and the new wearer of the Double Crown, and equally anxious that Pharaoh should not forget that the chief function of Egypt in such a friendship is to act as banker to a needy Babylonian monarch, who is really very busy over his new temple, and correspondingly impecunious. Perhaps the most interesting of all, in view of the later attitude of its writer, is the letter which Shubbiluliuma of Hatti sent to the new Pharaoh shortly after hearing of his accession. It is rather a curious document. The Hittite king plainly feels that he has to be polite on such an occasion, perhaps also because he was not yet ready to face the situation which would arise if he were not polite; but his letter is stiff and formal, and there is a distinct hint that he has a grievance against Egypt. It was convenient for the old intriguer to keep such a thing up his sleeve in preparation for the time when his hostility might more safely be manifested.

"The messages," he writes, "which thy father during his lifetime was accustomed to send, why hast thou, my brother, in such a fashion withheld them? Now hast thou, my brother, ascended the throne of thy father; and as thy father and I were accustomed to request mutual presents, so now also will you and I be good friends mutually." Good friends, of course, till Shubbiluliuma's time came, when the old grievance of the withheld embassies could be revived, and if necessary made a *casus belli*.

With this possible exception, which the young king's counsellors perhaps dismissed as merely the usual bit of grumbling of a greedy king who was angling for a bigger present, the foreign aspect of Egyptian affairs looked for the moment serene enough, or at least no worse than it

The Amarna Age

had looked any time during the last ten years or more. The first ominous movement of the reign was not from without, but from within, and was the herald of the great strife of faiths and ideals which only ended when Amenhotep IV. was laid in darkness and gloom in a dishonoured grave in the Valley of the Kings. The question of the content of the new faith which the Pharaoh, or his advisers, began to impose upon the nation at a very early stage of the reign, of its implications with regard to the other cults of the land, and of its derivation, must be left for separate discussion. For the present, it must suffice to notice three points which conditioned the introduction of the new faith, one of them making it inevitable that there should eventually be a life and death struggle between the new ideas and the old national religion.

The first point is that Atenism, which we have already seen raising its head in such incidents as the great water-festival of Amenhotep III., with its royal barge, *Atengleams*, and the adoption of the name "High-Priest of Harakhti-Rejoicing-in-the-Horizon, in His Name, 'Heat-which-is-in-Aten,'" as part of the royal titulary, has as its most vital and essential characteristic the fact of universalism, and that universalism was not an unnatural growth, but rather one which might have been expected as the consequence of the widening of horizon which must have followed upon the conquests of the great fighting Pharaohs of the early XVIIIth Dynasty. The ancient theology of Egypt had taken shape at a time so remote that the influences which were now playing upon the minds of men had scarcely been able to touch it. The early Egyptian thinkers created a theology which was to a great extent the reflection of the conditions in which they found themselves; and the

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

comparative seclusion and isolation of the Nile Valley, its long straggling thread of detached and sometimes hostile communities, found expression in a Pantheon whose gods were first purely Egyptian gods, and next, even as Egyptian, purely local gods. The only god who, in this narrowly national and local scheme of things, had any claim to general recognition, was the god of the Sun which shone on all sections of the long valley. As the Egyptian began to move beyond the limits of his own land, and to voyage, as he did even in early dynastic days, to Syria, to Punt, and to Sinai, he may gradually have become conscious of the inadequacy of a theology which took no account of the rich lands which were being opened to him, and the peoples which inhabited them ; but it was the far-reaching conquests of Thothmes I., Thothmes III., and Amenhotep II. which must finally have opened his eyes to the idea that his old theology was like the bed of the Hebrew prophet's parable, "shorter than that a man may stretch himself upon it, and the covering narrower than that he may wrap himself in it." Here were nations, institutions, cultures, of which his forefathers had never dreamed when they framed their creed ; how could he believe that the whole explanation of the relation of the divine to this wide and rich world was found in the narrow old dogmas of the priests about Amen of Thebes, or Ptah of Memphis ? Thus the triumphs of the Pharaohs were indirectly preparing the minds of the more thoughtful Egyptians for a change of attitude in religion, and the substitution of a universal god for the myriads of local gods of Egypt and the other lands.

Accordingly, we need not be surprised to find that the next point of the new faith was that it laid hold upon the

The Amarna Age

only aspect of the ancient religion which was more than local, and that Atenism was a development of Sun-worship. Ra, the Sun-god, in his various aspects, always made more than a merely local appeal, and though the main citadel of his worship was at Heliopolis, yet he was revered and adored under a score of different guises and names, practically throughout the land. In him, therefore, the minds which were working at a new adjustment of religious theory to the facts of life found a fixed point, a base of operations from which they could work towards a wider theology. The Sun-god was manifestly more than a local god; was it not conceivable that he was more than a national god? Therefore the idea that Akhenaten sprung a totally new theology upon his people, and failed because of that, is seen to be untrue and unjust. Atenism had its roots deep down in the ancient Egyptian faith, and was a development from it, not a hostile and alien growth.

The last point which we need notice at present, however, was that on which the new ideas finally made shipwreck. Atenism was an intolerant and iconoclastic faith. If Amenhotep IV. had been content merely to claim for his god a place among the other gods of Egypt he might have gone down to his grave in peace. Even if he had claimed the supreme place for the Aten, leaving the old gods alone, or identifying his new deity with them, as was done so often in other cases, deference to the Pharaoh would probably have prevented the disasters which actually followed upon the revolution, and Atenism would finally have settled down as a working religion, accepted by a considerable, and probably a steadily growing, section of the nation. But this was impossible. The old faiths were tolerant. Just because there were so

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

many of them, no god could draw to himself enough power to make a clean sweep of the others, and establish himself as sole god ; even Amen in the height of his pride had always to be on good terms with Ptah, who had indeed a shrine in the very citadel of Amen's power at Karnak. An easy system of identifications and transference of attributes got over all questions of local jealousy, and the Egyptian gods, with the possible exception of Set, were quite a happy family, as unconscious of any incongruity and inconsistency in the system which honoured them all without distinctions as the scores of local Madonnas and St. Georges of modern Europe, or their devotees. But the Aten, because he was a truly universal god, could not tolerate such conditions. He was a "jealous god" in the Hebrew sense, and could brook no pretender near his throne. It was only by degrees that the adherents of the new faith realised the full implications of what they believed about their god ; but gradually they awoke to the fact that implicit in the idea of a universal god is the further idea that he is the only god. Thenceforward for Atenism it was "world-power or downfall," and unfortunately for the world, as well as for the Atenists, it was the second alternative which materialised.

At the beginning of the reign we may probably suppose that matters were ordered more by the experienced Queen Tiy than by the boy-king ; and however devoted an adherent of Atenism Tiy may have been, she was a woman of the world, who had learned that even kings must take account of the prejudices of their subjects and the inertia of things-as-they-are. In the latter days of her husband's reign Atenism had been making its way

The Amarna Age

by peaceful penetration ; probably Tiy might have been content to see the process continue. At all events, the first important act of the reign was one which, while indicating the devotion of the king to his new god, did not necessarily shock the convictions of his people beyond limit, though possibly it was viewed with suspicion and jealousy by the most important and influential section of the populace of the capital—the priesthood of Amen. This was the building in Thebes of a great new temple to the god of the new faith. In one sense, of course, this was a challenge to the most influential priesthood of the whole land ; for Thebes was supremely the stronghold of Amen, and his college of priests was now by far the most compact and powerful organised body in the empire. Atenism was making its attack upon the very citadel of the ancient religion of Egypt. But the challenge was also one which the priests of Amen could scarcely as yet resent because of the accommodating temper and practice of the old cults. Thebes already had temples, large or small, to Ptah and Min, and shrines to half a dozen other lesser deities ; and though the two vast houses of Amen at Karnak and Luxor far outshone the modest shrines of the other gods, yet they all had a definitely recognised position, and priestly etiquette required that when Amen went abroad on one of his festal processions through the city, he should make a ceremonial call on his brother Ptah, whose temple was indeed one of the “ Stations ” of the image of Amen on its journey. Therefore, if it pleased Pharaoh to decree that the Aten, his new god, should also have a dwelling-place in the capital, it was scarcely for any of the orthodox party to challenge the royal action. It was only natural that the

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

king should wish to have at his own city a chapel of the faith which was dearest to him among the many faiths of his kingdom ; and even the priests of Amen, whatever may have been their secret thoughts, could not refuse to the god of their royal master the hospitality which they had already accorded to other divinities. Probably their thoughts were all the bitterer because they could not give expression to them, and found that the court party had drawn first blood in the coming contest ; but no overt protest can have been made.

The new temple must have been begun at a very early stage of the new reign. Certainly it was completed before the sixth year of the reign, when the court removed to Tell el-Amarna, which means that its commencement must date from the first or second year at the latest. This early date is also supported by several facts relating to the development of the new theology which are apparent from the inscriptions and carvings which have been discovered among the fragments of the building, afterwards re-used for more orthodox purposes. The king himself is still called Amenhotep—a title which of course was banned after his sixth year. The name of Aten, where it appears in the inscriptions, is not yet surrounded with a cartouche, as in all later inscriptions, and there is no mention of the title, "Ankh-em-maat" ("Living in Truth"), which the king was so fond of attaching to his name in later days.

The Aten temple was to be of sandstone, like much of the sacred work at Thebes. New quarry chambers were therefore opened at Silsileh, where a tablet was carved in commemoration of the event. Its inscription gives us invaluable first-hand information with regard to this first

The Amarna Age

official move of Atenism in Thebes. The tablet itself gives curious evidence of the conflict of ideas, and the confusion which prevailed, even in official minds, between the old faith and the new, at this early stage. It originally bore, above the inscription, a relief of the Pharaoh worshipping before Amen. Such an inconsistency would, of course, have been an impossibility at a later stage of the conflict ; but at this point possibly even the Pharaoh's mind was not quite clear as to all the implications of his new faith ; certainly the minds of his servants were not. The carving may have been done by royal order, or, perhaps more probably, the sculptor simply followed the time-honoured custom ; at all events, the carving had to be erased at a later stage, when it was an offence to the king's sense of the sole claim of the Aten to worship.

The inscription runs as follows, after the royal titulary, which has already been quoted : "First occurrence of His Majesty's giving command to — to muster all the workmen from Elephantine to Samhudet (*cf.* 'From Dan to Beersheba'), and the leaders of the army, in order to make a great breach for cutting out sandstone, in order to make the great sanctuary (Benben) of Harakhti in his name, 'Heat-which-is-in-Aten,' in Karnak. Behold the officials, the companions, and the chiefs of the fan-bearers were the chiefs of the quarry-service for the transportation of stone." This wholesale commandeering of high court dignitaries for the quarry-service of the new god may have had policy behind it. The men who had supervised the quarrying of stone for the new temple were *ipso facto* committed to the party of the king and suspect in the eyes of the Amen priesthood. If this was really the idea at the back of this great court *corvée*, we may prob-

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

ably attribute it to Queen Tiye or her father; such slenderness is not a feature of fanatical youth.

Above the figure of the king worshipping Amen, on the Silsileh tablet, there appears the emblem of the new faith, soon to be better known in Egypt, and to become the object of passionate devotion or equally passionate hatred, according to the predilections of the beholder. This symbolic representation of a god who was not to be worshipped through the medium of graven images was a solar disk, from which radiated streams of light, which terminate, above the head of the worshipper, in hands holding the "Ankh," or *crux ansata*, the emblem of life. Men's minds, perhaps even the mind of the king himself, must have been in an extraordinary confusion between old and new, when the very Shekinah of Atenism was represented overshadowing a figure of the chief of the gods whom Atenism was to overthrow. That Aten was not as yet believed to be the jealous god whom he was afterwards held to be is evidenced by the fact that on blocks of stone which once belonged to the temple there can still be read references to other gods, such as Horus, Set, and Upuat.

We know nothing of what the appearance of the building may have been. In the Theban tomb of Rameses, who was vizier under Amenhotep III., as well as under his son, and who must have been one of the earliest converts to the new court faith, there is a representation of the king and queen worshipping under the radiating sun-disk in a building which is probably the Theban Aten-temple; but it is not possible to derive much information from this picture as to the arrangements of the structure. Probably, like everything else at this stage of the reign, the

The Amarna Age

architecture of the shrine of Aten was a compromise between old and new, and while departing in some respects from the consecrated temple style of the past, had not reached the fully developed novelty of the great temples at Tell el-Amarna. It must have been a building of considerable size, a fact which is manifest from the scale of the reliefs which were carved on the blocks, in one of which the king's leg measures 20 inches across at the lower edge of his kilt. The haste with which it was built is evidenced by the fact that the great blocks which the Egyptian kings prided themselves on using in their structures were not employed. Small blocks which could be quickly handled were used, and the deficiencies of the building were concealed with a coat of smooth plaster. After the death of the king and the downfall of his faith, this insult to Amen in his own home was at once attacked, and not one stone of it was left upon another. Many of the blocks were re-used by Horemheb in the building of his pylon at Karnak, and still bear, in a structure dedicated to Amen, the insignia of Amen's deadliest enemy. The tomb of the scribe Hatay at Thebes tells us that he was "Scribe, overseer of the granary in the house of the Aten"; beyond this and the inscriptions already noted we have no other light upon the temple which was the first-fruits of the royal devotion to the new god.

Its erection had been a challenge to the priesthood of Amen, though, as we have seen, a challenge which they were scarcely in a position to accept or to resent. But the step which the young king, or his councillors, now began to take went beyond the claim for tolerance of a new divinity alongside Amen, which was all that the building of the temple necessarily implied. The order went forth



HEAD OF NEFERTITI—BROWN SANDSTONE, BERLIN (*pp.* 242-3, 293)
From Fechheimer's "Die Plastik der Ägypter" (Cassirer)

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

that the quarter of the city in which the new building stood should now be known by the name "Brightness-of-Aten-the-Great." Erelong this was followed by a still greater encroachment on the sovereign rights of the divine lord of Thebes, and it was commanded that the capital should be called "City-of-the-Brightness-of-Aten." Soviet Russia is not the only land whose rulers have realised the power of names upon the human imagination, and Amenhotep IV. was even more drastic in the sweep which he made of old names and things than the men who have tried to accustom the world to Leningrad as a symbol of more vital changes. Whatever may have been the public attitude of the priests of Amen in the matter of the shrine of the new god, this was an insult to their god which they could not brook ; and it was probably with the proclamation of the city's change of name that the hostility between the priesthood and the court became open and avowed.

Now, also, we begin to imagine that there are traces of the fact that the young king is no longer in leading-strings, but is taking the direction of things into his own hands. Young as he was, he was now attaining to the early maturity of the east—a maturity hastened perhaps by the influence of seclusion, the absence of call for physical strain, and the pressure of responsibility upon an already abnormally developed mind. At all events, Amenhotep now throws down another gage of battle before the sullen priesthood. His own name, like that of his father before him, meant "Amen rests" or "Amen is satisfied." Plainly it was impossible that the king should continue to be known by a title which embodied the hated name of the god whom he was trying to depose, and whose priests were

The Amarna Age

intriguing continually against their king's most cherished plans, and perhaps against his person. Accordingly, by the sixth year of his reign, Amenhotep changed his name to the one by which he has become familiar to our time, and called himself henceforward "Akhenaten" (Ikhnaton), "Aten is satisfied," or "He in whom Aten is satisfied."

The royal change of name was like the shouting of a war-cry. The battle was joined, and there was to be no spiritual peace in Egypt until Akhenaten had been laid in his early grave, and his successors had abjured the heresy into which he had led them. At once the temples of Amen were closed, his worship forbidden, and his name erased from inscriptions and monuments. "The cemetery of Thebes was visited, and in the tombs of the ancestors the hated name of Amon was hammered out wherever it appeared upon the stone. The rows on rows of statues of the great nobles of the old and glorious days of the empire, ranged along the walls of the Karnak temple, were not spared, and the god's name was invariably erased. Stone-cutters climbed to the top of Hatshepsut's lofty obelisks, and cut out the name of Amon to the very apex. The royal statues of his ancestors, including even the king's father, were not respected; and what was worse, as the name of that father Amenhotep, contained the name of Amon, the young king was placed in the unpleasant predicament of being obliged to cut out his own father's name in order to prevent the name of Amon from appearing 'writ large' on all the temples of Thebes." This was war to the knife indeed, so far as regarded the king and the Amen priesthood. Perhaps for a while the king cherished the idea that it did not

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

necessarily mean war with the priesthoods of the other gods as well ; but, on the one hand, fanaticism grows by what it feeds upon, and, on the other, priesthoods know more about solidarity than the most advanced Trade Unionist, and have known it for more centuries than Trade Unionism has known years. Erelong the pressure from within, of his own convictions, and that from without, in the shape of the combination of hostile priesthoods all over the land, forced Akhenaten to the logical conclusion, and he declared war on all the "thousand gods of Egypt." Up to this point he had tolerated other gods alongside his new divinity, and had even, as we have seen, allowed the names of Horus, Set, and Upuat to appear on the walls of his Aten temple ; now the very name "gods" was proscribed, and wherever it was possible to erase it from inscriptions it was erased.

All this, with all the other detail of conflict and planning which it involved, was the unquestioned work of a boy who may have been seventeen, or possibly nineteen, but who certainly had not passed out of his teens. To our Western minds, such a phenomenal precocity seems almost an impossibility, and we are inclined to suppose that even now the king must still have been acting under the influence of his mother and her advisers. Louis XIV., however, was not so very much older, even in years, than Akhenaten, when he pushed aside his councillors and took the reins of government into his own hands ; and he had not been trained in statecraft from his earliest childhood as the Egyptian had. In a land where boys and girls of fourteen and thirteen are fathers and mothers, we need not wonder to see a young man of seventeen or eighteen, trained from his infancy almost in the exercise of authority,

The Amarna Age

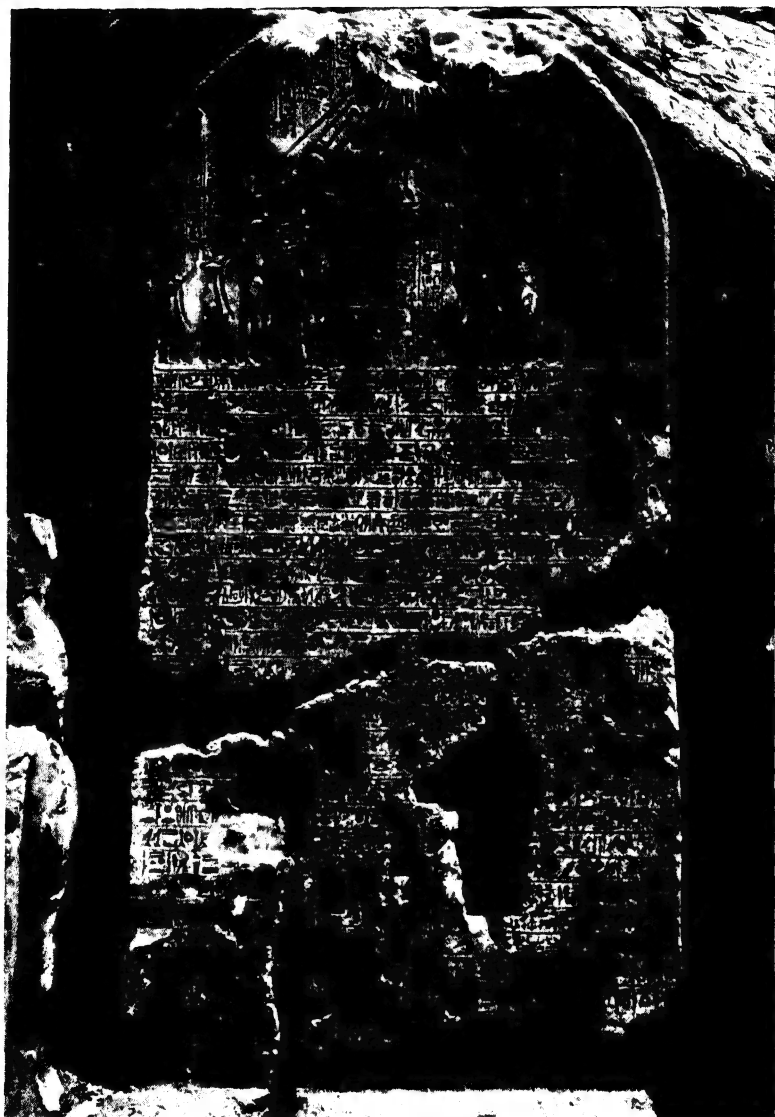
and deferred to as god incarnate by the greatest in the land, imposing his single will upon the nation which he knew only as the instrument of his wishes.*

That the changes which now so rapidly succeeded one another, each more drastic than its predecessor, were the work of Akhenaten, acting on his own initiative, and not that of the queen-mother or her advisers, is apparent from the fact that the stringency of the demands of the new religion increases exactly as the young king matures. Had the work been that of his council, we should have expected it to attain its maximum at an earlier day, and that maximum to have been a less thoroughgoing thing than it actually was, for the simple reason that a council of mature men of the world would know better how far it was safe to go than a young fanatic, who, like youth in all ages, was impatient of compromise. As Akhenaten grew to manhood, and to his full moral and spiritual stature, so the stringency of his decrees concerning the faith increased; what one would expect if the work were his own, but not otherwise.

This impression of the initiative and personal responsi-

* Josiah of Judah was not much older than Akhenaten when he began the work of reforming the religious practice of his country. He was eight when he ascended the throne, and his work of reformation began, according to the Chronicler, "in the twelfth year," *i.e.*, when he was nineteen or twenty.

Comparisons have also been made with the mad emperor, Elagabalus, and with the equally crazy Al-Hakim, the Fatimite Caliph of Egypt (A.D. 996-1021). Sir Wallis Budge, in working out the latter comparison ("Tutankhamen," etc., pp. 107, 108), takes the opportunity of insinuating that Akhenaten may have been guilty of wholesale murders, such as those which characterised the rule of the mad Caliph, though he admits that no evidence exists to prove such a charge. It would be difficult to imagine a more conclusive example of prejudice usurping the place of unbiassed judgment.



BOUNDARY STELE OF AKHETATEN (pp. 266-271)

From N. de G. Davies's "Rock Tombs of El Amarna" (Egypt Exploration Society)

The New Supreme Jove of the Ancient East

bility of the young king is, I think, confirmed by the remarkable phrasing of the inscription in the Theban tomb of the vizier Rames, who was evidently a very early convert to Atenism, and whose tomb at Thebes is one of the earliest documents for the reign—a fact which is proved by the king's name in it being still Amenhotep, and by the other fact that the vizier at a later stage had another tomb made for himself at Tell el-Amarna. In the inscription at Thebes Rames puts into the mouth of the king the following statement: "The words of Ra are before thee" (he is addressing Rames), ". . . of my august father, who taught me their essence, . . . them to me. All that is his . . . since he equipped the land . . . in order to exalt me since the time of the god. It was known in my heart, opened to my face, I understood. . . ." The king here claims for himself that he received the doctrines of Atenism directly by inspiration from the god himself, "my august father." The answer of Rames is not less remarkable, and not less clear in its attribution of the guidance of the nation to the personal influence of the king. "Thy monuments shall endure like the heavens, for thy duration is like Aten therein. The existence of thy monuments is like the existence of the heavens; thou art the Only One of (Aten), in possession of his designs. Thou hast led the mountains; their secret chambers, the terror of thee is in the midst of them, as the terror of thee is in the hearts of the people; they hearken to thee as the people hearken."

In the face of such evidence as to Akhenaten's personal share in the development of the new creed and practice of Atenism, evidence which dates from before the removal to Tell el-Amarna, it is impossible to question the

The Amarna Age

fact that, young as he was, Akhenaten was already conscious in his own mind of his spiritual destiny, and was already acting as the spiritual instructor of his leading courtiers, and imposing his will upon the nation. Ere long it became manifest to him that Thebes was impossible as a field for the sowing of such a crop of faith as he wished to see ripening. The traditions and the atmosphere of the town of Amen were all poisonous to the new growth. Nor is it by any means unlikely that priestly intrigues and conspiracies were making his capital an unsafe abode for the heretic who was thrusting down Amen from his pride of place. It was far more likely that Atenism would thrive and come to its own in a new and holy city, built upon a virgin site, and far from the pollutions and the bitter hatreds of the ancient faith. It was characteristic of the clear vision and the inflexible resolution of the young enthusiast that before he had reigned for six years he had made up his mind to risk the tremendous breach with the old traditions of the land which was implicit in his action, and not only to change the official faith of Egypt, but to desert the capital which his forefathers had made glorious, and which was linked with all the triumphs of the empire, and to go forth in search of the Holy City of his soul.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CITY OF THE HORIZON AND ITS ART

THE complete break with old traditions and associations which Akhenaten now made in the removal of the seat of government to an entirely new site was no mere outbreak of petulance or spite on the part of the king against the priests of Amen and the stubborn Theban populace. No doubt anger, and perhaps considerations of personal safety, had their share in prompting the move ; but it was part of a carefully considered plan which was intended to give to Atenism a settled habitation and citadel in each of the departments of the empire. As the state god was no longer merely an Egyptian god, but a being whose sway was world-wide, it was fitting that the extent of his dominion should be suggested by assigning to him a holy city not only in Egypt, but also in Asia and in Ethiopia, whence, as from a centre, his influence might spread abroad throughout the surrounding land. The Syrian city of the Aten is unknown ; but the Ethiopian one was situated near the Third Cataract on the east bank of the Nile, and was known as "Gem-Aten," a title whose significance is unknown. The Egyptian city of Aten was also to be the seat of imperial government and of the court : and thus Akhenaten not only removed himself and his entourage from dangerous surroundings, and secured unbroken ground for the seed of his new faith, but also punished the recalcitrant Thebans and their priestly counsellors. To say nothing of the material loss which

The Amarna Age

the removal of the whole court circle must have meant to Thebes, the city must have been profoundly shocked and disturbed by the thought that their "Good God," the merciful deity incarnate who was the visible image of divinity to them, had in anger removed the light of his countenance from them. In course of time, no doubt, the edge of this separation grew dull ; but for the time Akhenaten could have struck no harder blow against his enemies than he did by the removal of his presence.

We have already seen the main characteristics of the site to which the seat of government was now removed. The bay of the Arabian hills in which Akhenaten determined to plant his new city measures about six miles in length, and its maximum breadth is about three miles. By no means the whole of this area was occupied, however, by the new capital. The remaining ruins extend from a point about a mile north of the village of et-Til, one of the sources of the modern name of the place, to Hawata, where the cliffs sweep round again almost to the river-bank, covering thus a length, in a north and south line, of a little over five miles ; but while the length of the town thus pretty well fills up the available space along the river-bank, the breadth of the occupied area is less than a third of that available, extending only to a maximum of about eleven hundred yards. We are thus to conceive of Akhenaten's new capital as a long, straggling town, occupying a narrow strip of land roughly five miles long by a thousand yards broad, and situated between the narrow belt of fertile land on the river-bank and the sandy desert behind, which extends to the base of the hills. The reason why the town was thus inconveniently stretched out in length and limited in breadth

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

was twofold. On the one hand, the fertile land on the river-bank was needed for purposes of cultivation, and, on the other, it was impossible to build far out in the desert because of the lack of water. Thus the king was obliged to plan his new city, not as he would, but as he must.

It is evident that the plan of removal must have been formed a good while before it was finally carried out, for though, with crude brick and an unlimited supply of labour, it was doubtless possible for Pharaoh to create a city with almost miraculous speed, yet we can scarcely allow less than a couple of years for the preparation, even on the roughest and most temporary scale, of accommodation for the whole court and all the departments of government. The demarcation of the site was carried out by the king himself in company with his queen, Nefertiti, and was made the occasion of a great state function. The proceedings are recorded upon the boundary stelai with which the territory of the Holy City was marked off, and of which fourteen still survive ; and the record of one of these reads as follows: "Year 6, fourth month of the second season, thirteenth day." (Then follows the Vivat, and the titulary of the king and the queen.) "On this day One was in Akhetaten in the pavilion of woven stuff which His Majesty (Life! Health! Strength!) made in Akhetaten, the name of which is 'Aten-is-satisfied.' His Majesty (L! H! S!) appeared upon a great chariot of electrum, like Aten, when he rises in the horizon. He filled the Two Lands with his loveliness. On beginning the goodly way to Akhetaten, at the first exploration of it which His Majesty (L! H! S!) made, in order to found it as a monument to Aten, according to the command of his father Aten, who is

The Amarna Age

given life for ever and ever ; in order to make for him a monument in its midst. One caused that a great oblation should be offered, consisting of bread, beer, oxen, calves, cattle, fowl, wine, gold, incense, all beautiful flowers. On this day was founded Akhetaten for the living Aten, that favour and love might be received on behalf of King Akhenaten."

Opposite the town, on the western bank of the river, lay another bay between the river and the Libyan hills, containing a much larger area of fertile land, now intersected by the Bahr Yusuf ; this also was included in the sacred territory of the new capital, as without it the city would scarcely have been able to maintain itself. The whole area thus delimited extended to a length of about eight miles, north and south, and a breadth of from twelve to seventeen miles east and west. A series of great stelai, sculptured with reliefs of the king and queen and their family worshipping the Aten, and inscribed with the details of the sacred territory, was set up north, south, east, and west at all points of importance, so that no one should be ignorant of the boundaries of the Holy Land of the new god. The inscription is as follows : " My oath of truth, which it is my desire to pronounce, and of which I will not say ' It is false ' eternally for ever : The southern tablet, which is on the eastern mountain of Akhetaten. It is the tablet of Akhetaten, namely this one by which I have made halt : I will not pass beyond it southwards, eternally for ever. Make the south-west tablet opposite it on the western mountain of Akhetaten exactly.

" The middle tablet, which is on the eastern mountain of Akhetaten. It is the tablet of Akhetaten by which I

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

have made halt on the Orient mountain of Akhetaten : I will not pass beyond it Orient-wards, eternally for ever. Make the middle tablet which is to be on the western mountain of Akhetaten opposite it exactly. The north-eastern tablet of Akhetaten, by which I have made halt. It is the northern tablet of Akhetaten : I will not pass beyond it down-streamwards eternally for ever. Make the north-western tablet, which is to be on the western mountain of Akhetaten, opposite it exactly.

“ And Akhetaten extends from the south tablet as far as the north tablet, measured between tablet and tablet on the east mountain of Akhetaten, amounting to 6 *ater*, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ of a *khe*, and 4 cubits ; likewise from the south-west tablet of Akhetaten to the north-west tablet on the west mountain of Akhetaten, amounting to 6 *ater*, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ of a *khe*, and 4 cubits exactly likewise.

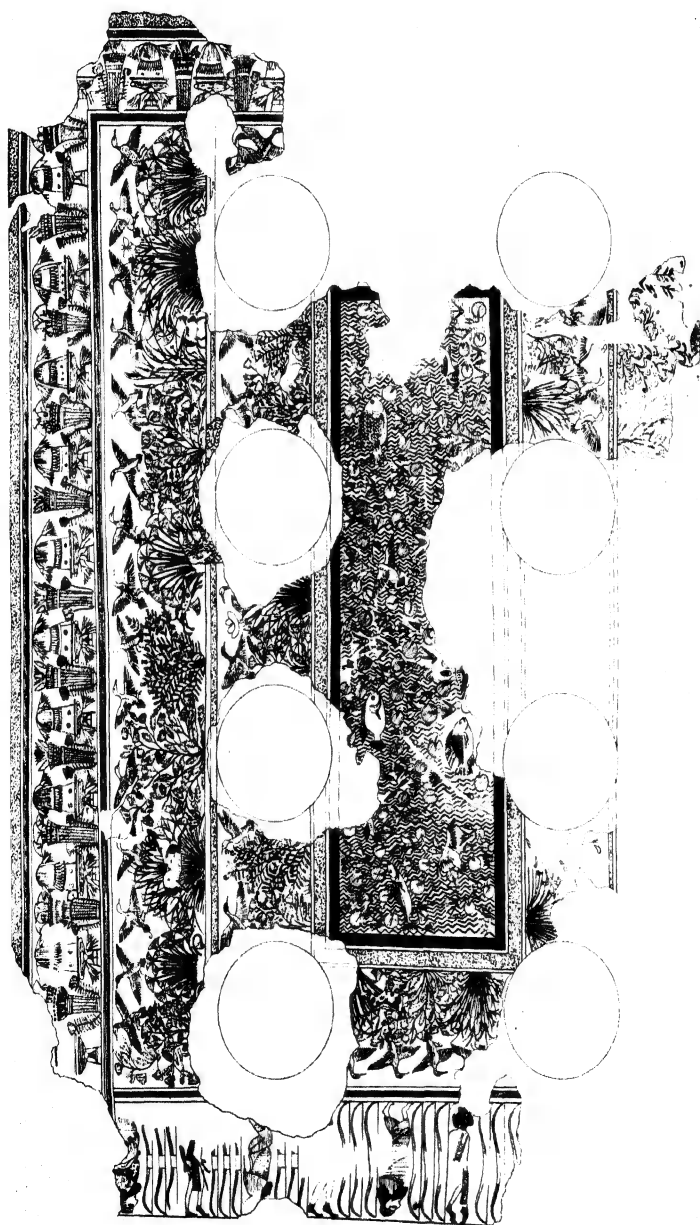
“ And the area within these four tablets, from the east mountain to the west mountain, is Akhetaten in its proper self : it belongs to Father (Hor-Aten)—mountains, deserts, meadows, islands, upper-ground, lower-ground, land, water, villages, embankments, men, beasts, groves, and all things which the Aten, my Father, shall bring into existence eternally for ever. I will not neglect this oath which I have made to the Aten, my Father, eternally for ever ; nay, but it shall be set on a tablet of stone as the south-east boundary, likewise as the north-east boundary of Akhetaten, and shall be set likewise on a tablet of stone as the south-west boundary, likewise as the north-west boundary of Akhetaten. It shall not be erased, it shall not be washed out, it shall not be kicked, it shall not be struck with stones, its spoiling shall not be brought about, if it be missing, if it be spoilt, if the stela

The Amarna Age

on which it is shall fall, I will renew it again afresh in the place where it was."

Thus the new capital was the centre of a holy domain into which nothing profane should enter. One is forcibly reminded of the sacred area round about the temple at Jerusalem which the prophet Ezekiel contemplated, and whose arrangements and measurements he lays down in his forty-fifth chapter: "Moreover, when ye shall divide the land by lot for inheritance, ye shall offer an oblation unto the Lord, an holy portion of the land: the length shall be the length of five-and-twenty thousand reeds, and the breadth shall be ten thousand: it shall be holy in all the border thereof round about." Ezekiel's holy domain seems to have been about $8\frac{1}{8}$ miles square, not so very dissimilar in size from the holy land of Akhetaten; but the Hebrew prophet's vision remained only an Utopia; Akhenaten's idea was solid fact.

In the paragraphs quoted from the demarcation tablets, there occurs a vow which is repeated in the longer inscription of the earlier steles: "I will not pass beyond the southern tablet of Akhetaten southward, neither will I pass beyond the northern tablet of Akhetaten northward." It has been suggested that this vow means that the king pledged himself never to go beyond the boundaries of his holy domain for the rest of his life, and of course this is a possible interpretation of the words; but it seems much more probable that he was merely using a legal phrase by which a property-owner admits that he has no rights beyond his own boundary, and this interpretation is rendered almost certain by the context in the longer and earlier inscription: "I will not pass beyond the northern tablet of Akhetaten northward, *to make for*



PAINTED PAVEMENT, TELL EL AMARNA (p. 278)
From Petrie's "Tell el Amarna" (Methuen)

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

him Akhetaten therein." The domain of the Aten was to be strictly his own, but it was not to be increased by unjust appropriations of land on any side. In Ezekiel's description of the holy domain of Jerusalem, emphasis is laid on the fact that the division of the land is to be on strictly equitable lines, and that the prince is not to oppress the commoner; in Akhenaten's Utopia, the king gives security for his god that the holy domains shall not encroach on the rights of other people. This seems a more reasonable view than that which would picture the young king as shutting himself up for the rest of his life in a sacred retreat, and leaving his kingdom to look after itself. Akhenaten was undoubtedly a fanatic; but he was by no means a fool, as some of his critics seem to imagine. He neglected his foreign empire, as we shall see, apparently on principle, because the maintenance of it meant war; but the fact that there is no evidence of revolt within the borders of Egypt itself during the whole reign is surely ample proof that there was no such abandonment of his royal duties on the part of Akhenaten as has been assumed. If the king had actually shut himself up for good in his little sacred rectangle, leaving the rest of the land open to the propaganda of the outraged priests of Amen and of the other gods, Egypt would have been in a flame of rebellion within a very short time.

The choosing of the site had been the work of the king himself, and his delight in the establishment of his holy city was extreme. It is picturesquely expressed in the early boundary inscription already quoted. "His Majesty stood before Father (Hor-Aten), and Aten radiated upon him in life and length of days, invigorating his body every day. Said His Majesty, 'Bring me the companions

The Amarna Age

of the King, the great ones and mighty ones, the captains of soldiers . . . of the whole land!’ They were conducted to him immediately. They were on their bellies before His Majesty, smelling the ground to His mighty will. His Majesty said unto them : ‘Behold Akhetaten which the Aten desires me to make unto him as a monument in the name of My great Majesty for ever : it was the Aten, my Father, that brought me to Akhetaten. Not a noble directed me to it, not any man in the whole land directed me to it, saying, “It is fit for His Majesty that he make an Horizon-of-Aten (Akhetaten) in this place.” Nay, but it was the Aten, My Father, that directed me to it, to make it for him as an Horizon-of-Aten. . . . I will make Akhetaten for the Aten My Father, in this place. I will not make for him Akhetaten south of it, north of it, west of it, or east of it. I will not pass beyond the southern tablet of Akhetaten southward, neither will I pass beyond the northern tablet of Akhetaten northward, to make for him Akhetaten therein ; neither will I make it for him on the western side of Akhetaten. Nay, but I will make Akhetaten for the Aten, My Father, on the Orient side of the Akhetaten, the place which he did enclose for his own self with cliff, and make a *hryt* in the midst of it, that I might offer to him thereon ; this is it.’

“Neither shall the Queen say unto me, ‘Behold, there is a goodly place for Akhetaten in another place,’ and I hearken unto her : neither shall any noble of all men who are in the land say unto me, ‘Behold, there is a goodly place for Akhetaten in another place,’ and I hearken to them, whether it be downstream, or southward, or westward or Orient-ward. I will not say, ‘I will abandon Akhetaten, I will hasten away, and make Akhet-

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

aten in this other goodly place for ever.' Nay, but I did find this Akhetaten for the Aten, which he had himself desired, and with which he is delighted for ever and ever." (Cf. again the Divine choosing of Jerusalem in the 132nd Psalm—"For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.")

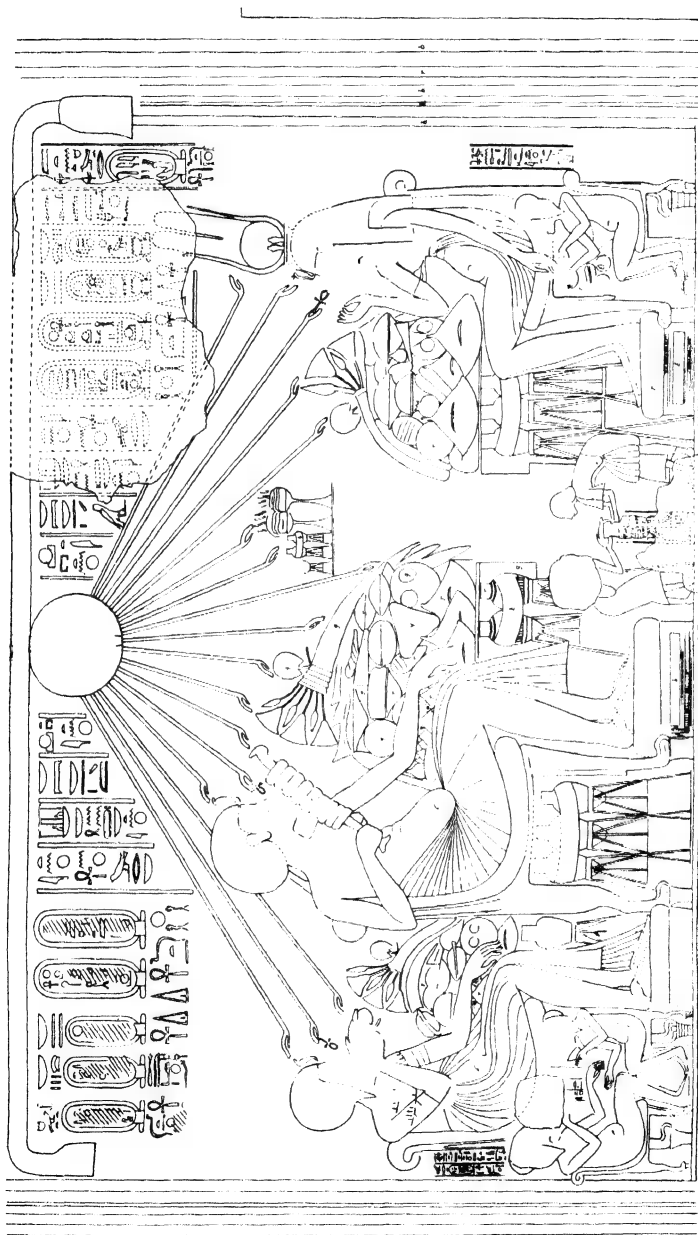
And then, after an enumeration of the various temples and shrines of the Aten which he purposes to build in his new city, the king makes a declaration which sounds singularly pathetic, when one remembers how far the event actually proved from the peaceful ending of his days which he foresaw: "There shall be made for me a sepulchre in the Orient mountain; my burial shall be made there in the multitude of jubilees which the Aten, my Father, hath ordained for me, and the burial of the chief wife of the King (Nefertiti) shall be made therein in that multitude of years . . . and the burial of the King's daughter, Merit-aten, shall be made in it in that multitude of years. If I die in any town of the north, south, west, or Orient, in the multitude of years, I will be brought, and my burial made in Akhetaten. If the Great Queen (Nefertiti), who lives, die in any town of north, south, west, or Orient, in the multitude of years, she shall be brought and buried in Akhetaten. If the King's daughter, Merit-aten, die in any town of north, south, west, or Orient, she shall be brought and buried in Akhetaten." Even the sternest critic of the failings of Akhenaten can scarcely, one would think, withhold a meed of sympathy from the young king whose end was to be so utterly different from his forecast of it. His days, "few and evil," instead of the "multitude of jubilees" which

The Amarna Age

he predicted for himself, and his burial, not with honour, in the holy city of his love, but a shameful huddling away in a dishonoured tomb in the Valley of the Kings of that Thebes which he hated ; seldom have fact and anticipation been more ironically contrasted !

One mutilated sentence in the inscription of one of the great earlier steles contains the only actual reference on the part of the king to the strife between himself and the priesthoods of the ancient Egyptian gods, and reveals the bitterness of spirit with which, even in the midst of the joy of his new task, he remembered the unworthy reception which his teachings had met at the hands of the professed teachers of truth. " For, as Father (Hor-Aten) liveth . . . priests, more evil are they than those things which I have heard unto year 4, more evil are they than those things which I have heard in the year . . . more evil are they than those things which king . . . heard, more evil are they those things which Menkheperura heard . . . in the mouth of negroes, in the mouth of any people." One is tempted to speculate as to what were the dreadful things which the king's grandfather, Menkheperura (Thothmes IV.), heard from negroes, manifestly in his campaign against the Wawat more than forty years before, and which had left such an impression upon the Egyptian mind. We shall never know them, and consequently shall never have the measure of the infamy (or what they doubtless called their zeal for true doctrine) of the priests of Amen ; but the passage reveals the bitterness of soul with which the king remembered the rejection of the truth which to him seemed as clear as day.

The mention in the great inscription of the princess Merit-aten introduces us to the fact that the king and



TUT, AKHENATEN AND NEFERTITI AT TABLE (p. 283)
 From N. de G. Davies's "Rock Tombs of El-Amarna" (Egypt Exploration Society)

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

queen, boy and girl as they were, according to our ideas, began their life in the new city with a small family, which grows rapidly until it numbers seven; all, unfortunately for the future of the dynasty, daughters. Of these, the eldest, the princess Merit-aten, was the only one born before the first demarcation of Akhetaten. In the interval between the demarcation and the removal of the court to its new seat two more daughters were born, the younger of whom must have been a mere infant when the change took place. In the later steles, as in S, two daughters are represented as taking part along with the king and queen in the adoration of the Aten. The second daughter, Maket-aten, died in youth, during her father's reign, happier, perhaps, in her destiny than her sisters in theirs. The eldest was married to one of the nobles of the court, Smenkhkara, who, in virtue of his relationship to the Pharaoh, ascended the throne on Akhenaten's death, and reigned for a short time. The third girl, Ankh. s. en. pa. aten, was married to another courtier, who may possibly have been of the blood royal, Tutankh-aten, who has sprung into fame within the last few years under the name Tutankhamen, which was the sign of his return to orthodoxy. Ankh. s. en. pa. aten was left a widow in early womanhood by the death of her husband after a short reign; and it is possible that she is the Dakhamun who appears in one of the Boghaz-Keui documents as writing to a Hittite king (probably Shubbi-luliuma) to inform him that her husband, Bib-khuru-riyas (a possible Hittite version of Neb-kheperu-ra) has died, leaving her childless, and suggesting a marriage between herself and one of the young Hittite princes. If the identification of Dakhamun with Ankh. s. en. pa. aten

The Amarna Age

should prove well grounded (a doubtful matter), this would be a despairing attempt on the part of the young widow to keep her head above the flood of reactionary intrigue and hatred which surged around her. Apparently it failed, and she disappears from the scene, in a manner of which we know nothing certainly, but may infer a good deal without much likelihood of being wrong.

Of the remaining daughters, who were born in Akhet-aten, we know next to nothing. One of the letters of Burraburiash of Babylon to Akhenaten reveals the fact that one of the Pharaoh's daughters is wife of the son of the Babylonian king, but is living at her father's court. The marriage must have been by proxy, as any of Akhenaten's daughters, save the eldest, who was otherwise disposed of, would be of too tender an age to be sent to Babylon, which explains the fact of the princess still living at home. Burraburiash sends to his little daughter-in-law a magnificent necklace of 1,048 precious stones; and with the true caution of a Babylonian, who was nothing if he was not a business man, he carefully counts them, and puts the number down, so that nobody should take toll of the gems by the way. This princess may possibly have been the fourth daughter, Nefer-neferu-aten. With the later members of the family there comes a change in the type of name adopted. The names compounded with Aten disappear, and in their place we have such names as Nefer-neferu-ra and Sotep-en-ra. It would be rash to build on this tiny fact any theory as to a possible weakening of the king's devotion to the Aten in later years; but at least it suggests a modification of the bitter intolerance of the middle period, and a return to the more tolerant attitude of early days.

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

By the eighth year of the reign the change from Thebes had been accomplished, and the court was definitely and completely established at Akhetaten—"The Horizon of Aten." This fact is established by a kind of docket which appears on several of the Amarna steles. It runs as follows: "This oath (with regard to the boundaries) was repeated in year 8, first month of the season, eighth day. Royalty was in Akhetaten, and Pharaoh (Life! Health! Strength!) stood, mounted on a great chariot of electrum, inspecting the tablets of the Aten which are on the mountain as the south-east boundary of Akhetaten." This renewal of the oath is plainly the official consummation of the transference of the seat of government; and therefore, while the initiation of the change dates from the sixth year, it was not finally completed until the eighth year.

The new capital has revealed the main outlines of its structure to modern excavation, German and English. We have already seen its chief characteristic of length without any great breadth, and the reason for it. The long narrow city was laid out with a fair approach to regularity. It was traversed from north to south by three main streets, which were crossed at right angles by other streets running east and west. Apart from this rectangular arrangement, however, there is no further attempt to secure uniformity in the blocks of houses, which vary considerably in width, and, in the cross streets, even in alignment. Town-planning evidently did not enter into the minds of the builders of the City of the Horizon, though they had a virgin site to experiment upon. Probably the haste with which the city was run up militated against regularity of plan, as it certainly did against any division of the place into business and

The Amarna Age.

residential quarters. To all appearance houses were put down without any regard to questions of suitable grouping. One imagines the great nobles, who would be the first to know of the change which was in contemplation, staking out claims for themselves on a big scale; and then, when funds ran short, and they were not able to take up the whole of their allotments, the vulgar crowd coming in and squatting on the unoccupied parts of the big claims till the town presented a democratic mixture of classes and occupations. "High-priest rubs shoulders with leather-worker, and Vizier with glass-maker. This is doubtless mainly due to the fact that at the moment of arrival on the new site the wealthier and more influential citizens marked out their claims at such intervals as to leave more ample space for their houses and gardens than they actually intended to use, or succeeded in using. The poorer population were thus forced to fill in the spaces between the estates of the rich, for to go further afield would have taken them out of the region of easy water-supply, and involved an uneconomic increase of distances in general."

Probably, therefore, Akhenaten's Holy City, while it may have been all the more picturesque for its jumbling together of wealth and poverty, and of large and small houses, lacked the stateliness of a more ordered plan. One imagines the great mansions set in the midst of their pleasantries, and embosomed in flowers, and around the walls of their gardens the poor cottages of the working classes clinging like swallows' nests, or the houses of a French cathedral city round its great church. The mansions of the grandees were fine spacious houses, with great reception halls, tastefully decorated, plenty of living

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

and bedroom accommodation, and ample bathroom and lavatory provision. The average size of the house of the finer type is from 65 to 70 feet square, that of the Vizier Nakht, one of the finest specimens of the domestic architecture of Akhetaten, measuring about 95 feet by 85. From these spacious proportions, the houses range down to small workmen's houses, whose accommodation is limited to the indispensable front-hall, living-room, bedroom, and perhaps a kitchen. One and all, whether they were the stately mansions of the nobles, or the humble cottages of the workmen, the houses of Akhetaten were built of crude sun-dried brick, as was also the main part of the royal palace. This is quite in accordance with the sensible Egyptian idea that a man should build for his own time, as he built for his own pleasure, and not saddle his successor with a house which he might not like or be able to keep up.

Akhenaten's palace lay in the northern quarter of the city, a little south of the Great Temple, and a little nearer the river-bank. Little can be made of its architecture from the pitiful remains which have survived, and it is not even certain whether the forest of what seem to be pillars in the great hall are really pillars or merely supports for the floor of another room above the basement. The extraordinary feature of the huge building, which seems to have measured over 1,400 feet in length, by between four and five hundred in breadth, is this great pillared hall, 428 feet wide by 234 feet long, which makes all other palace halls look paltry. It contained 542 pillars, or what seem to be pillars, and if this is the true meaning of the bases which remain, the great chamber must have seemed a perfect forest of columns, and resembled more

The Amarna Age

one of the great hypostyle halls of an Egyptian temple gone mad than anything else earthly. Humble as were the materials of which its walls were composed, the decoration of the building was magnificent. The painted pavements, with their vigorous rendering of naturalistic motives, and the wonderful conventional ornament of capitals and other details, executed in the brilliant colour glazes which were one of the main products of the city's workshops, have left us only fragments from which the general effect has to be inferred, and some of the finest work has been maliciously destroyed even since its discovery ; but one can imagine that Akhenaten's new home must have been singularly beautiful, and that the king, as he looked around his stately halls and bright rooms, had better reason than Nero for saying, "At last I am housed like a king."

Akhetaten was amply provided with temples of all sorts and sizes. The king's strict attachment to his sole god did not hinder him from cherishing reverence towards the memory of his famous ancestors, though he had broken away from their creed. In the city several shrines were dedicated to the great kings of the past, such as Amenhotep II. and Thothmes IV. Then there were such minor temples as the "House of putting the Aten to Rest," over whose rites Queen Nefertiti herself presided ; a temple for the Queen-mother Tiye, and a shrine for the princess Baktaten, the king's younger sister, and another for the princess Merit-aten, his eldest daughter, the "House of Rejoicing" of the Aten, in the island of "Aten-distinguished-in-Jubilees," the River-Temple and the semi-sacred kiosks of the "Precinct of the Southern Pool," "Maru-Aten," the precinct of Aten, as it was called ;

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

while the Great State Temple overshadowed all the rest in size and magnificence. Its arrangements and ritual must be left for discussion along with the details of the faith of the Aten.

Far to the south in the Amarna plain, and near to the modern village of Hawata, lies what, from modern excavation of its remains, seems to have been one of the most picturesque features of the city. This was "Maru-Aten," "The precinct of Aten"—a name which was used to describe an enclosure which must have formed a kind of royal paradise or pleasance, where the attractions of the open-air life of a shady and well-watered garden, such as every Egyptian loved, were combined with a reception hall and a small temple. Love of nature is manifest in all the religious teaching of Akhenaten, and apparently in Maru-Aten he created the means of enjoying the beauty which was the gift of his God, under conditions where he could pass at once from the enjoyment of the gift to the praise of the giver.

Maru-Aten consisted of two rectangular enclosures, surrounded by a girdle-wall, and divided from one another by a partition wall. The northern and larger enclosure measured 200 metres by 100, while the southern and smaller was 160 metres by 80. The main features of the smaller enclosure were a pillared reception hall and a small artificial lake, and the rest of the space was probably mainly laid out in flower-beds and shrubberies. The greater portion of the larger section of the paradise was taken up by a rectangular lake or large tank, measuring about 120 metres by 60, and about one metre in depth. At the western end of the lake, a stone quay ran out into the water, affording a convenient

The Amarna Age

place of embarkation for the daring spirits who ventured upon a voyage across these dangerous deeps. Various buildings lay around the lake; but the greatest interest attached to the group in the north-eastern corner of the enclosure, though a hall of audience on the northern side of the lake, whose cellars had once been well stocked with wine, as the clay sealings showed, proved that Akhenaten's enjoyment of the beauties of nature was not unaccompanied with less ethereal comforts. The extreme north-eastern corner of the paradise was occupied by a gaily-decorated building, which seems to have been a kind of water-garden, where water-plants of all sorts grew out of a system of tanks which took up most of the floor-space. South of this interesting plant-aquarium came a stretch of flower-beds, and south of these again a canal ran round the four sides of a rectangle, enclosing a small island. The island was approached from the south through a small portico-temple with two pylons, from which a tiny bridge led across the moat to the island. Passing between two kiosks, identical in plan, and each showing an opened pillared front to the pathway, Pharaoh and his favoured guests arrived at length at the steps of a little temple, in the centre of whose floor stood an altar. Behind the altar an open doorway led to another bridge by which access was given to the garden and plant-aquarium already mentioned. Such were the main features of one of the most charming features of Akhenaten's city. One figures the king turning from more serious cares to the entertainment of many a gay company here, in the happier days before sorrow and disaster began to break his spirit. The whole arrangement is thoroughly characteristic of the Egyptian nature, and supremely so of its development in

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

the Amarna Age, when in Atenism the love of nature became a part of religion and a passion.

The Egypt Exploration Society's excavators have most unkindly and ungraciously tried to insinuate a serpent into this little Eden in the shape of a suggestion that the absence of the name of Queen Nefertiti from the fragmentary inscriptions which have been recovered from Maru-Aten points to domestic trouble in the royal family, and to the breaking up of that idyllic love and unity of which so many pictures have survived. Surely such a suggestion is an entirely unnecessary outrage upon our feelings, and upon the memory of a couple whose mutual affection must often have been the only stay of their hearts in sore trouble. Akhenaten has had to bear enough blame, living and dead, without saddling him, almost gratuitously, with that of having quarrelled with his beautiful wife. It surely needs more than the mere absence of Nefertiti's name, of the reasons for which we know absolutely nothing, to outweigh the mass of solid evidence which points to a happiness in wedded love not often enjoyed in royal unions; and until some weightier testimony is forthcoming from the Devil's advocate we may continue to believe that as Akhenaten and Nefertiti were lovely and pleasant in their lives, so they were not divided, till the end.

How great is that mass of evidence with regard to the happiness of the family life of the royal household at Amarna, those who are familiar with the art of the period will at once recognise. In the representations of royalty in the tomb reliefs and paintings a complete break is made with the ancient tradition that Pharaoh must only be represented in unapproachable dignity. In the earlier art of the dynasty, indeed, Pharaoh is frequently depicted seated

The Amarna Age

side by side with his queen ; but he is always "the Good God," enthroned in state under a gorgeous canopy fringed with the royal *uraï*, and shadowed by the protecting wings of the Vulture and the Hawk. Akhenaten, on the other hand, is seen in all sorts of unconventional attitudes in the midst of his family, from whom he is rarely separated in the reliefs. Even at the great state functions, such as that in which he is depicted rewarding the zeal of the high-priest Meryra with gifts of gold and with words of praise for his devotion to the doctrine of the Aten, the queen stands behind him, portrayed on the same scale as her husband, while the princesses are also present. King and queen lean out together from the royal balcony in the relief from the tomb of Meryra II., to bestow on the favoured courtier collars of gold and enamel, while the royal daughters are grouped behind, holding more collars to hand to their parents. In some cases the representation of the royal family is still more intimate and unconventional. In the pictures from the tombs of Mahu and Ahmes, the king and queen are shown driving in the same chariot, and the queen is actually kissing her royal lord, much to the detriment of his driving, no doubt, while a little princess leans over the front of the chariot, and, in one case, prods the fiery horses with a rod. Constantly you see the royal couple sitting together, with their arms affectionately twined round one another, their daughters jestingly acting as fan-bearers, in place of the usual officials, or squatting about on cushions at their parents' feet in all sorts of natural positions. When the "Great Royal Mother," Queen Ti, comes down to Akhetaten to pay a visit to her son and daughter, we have the state banquet with which her advent was celebrated

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

depicted in the tomb of Huya in a fashion which would certainly have caused any self-respecting court artist of earlier days to have had a fit of apoplexy. Pharaoh and his wife sit on high-backed thrones, facing their mother, who wears all her royal insignia. Before the king and queen stands a table covered with a green cloth, and piled high with the materials of a Gargantuan feast, while before Tiy another table, similarly loaded, bears witness to the artist's estimate of the royal lady's appetite. Tiy is apparently taking a rest from the labours of eating ; but Pharaoh and his wife are in the full tide of their attack on the provisions. Akhenaten is holding in his fingers a broiled bone as long as his arm, which he is busy gnawing, while the dainty Nefertiti is making a determined onslaught on what appears to be a whole roast duck, which she also holds in her fingers. At the foot of Nefertiti's throne sit two princesses, playing with one another, while another sits beside her grandmother, and hands her some more cakes. In another relief from the same tomb, the royal party has got past the eating stage, and is whole-heartedly drinking healths out of business-like wine-cups ; one princess stands on the footstool of her mother's throne, and quaffs her wine with her parents, while her sister, standing on the floor, helps herself on the sly to some of the cakes.

Here, then, is a new thing in Egyptian art. To its significance in that respect we shall return directly ; meanwhile it is sufficient to note its evidence as to the attitude of the king and queen towards one another and the public. No Pharaoh was ever thus represented, before or since ; and the new conception which was thus offered to the nation must have wrought a revolutionary change in the

The Amarna Age

thought of the whole land with regard to royalty. Had Atenism succeeded in its great aims, probably this change would have been all for good ; as it was, the chances are that it only weakened the power of the throne and the respect of the nation for its occupant, and prepared the way for the reaction. In this, as in other more important things, Akhenaten was too far ahead of his times. His attitude is an essentially modern one, and must have been quite unsuited to the ideas of his land and time. There can be no doubt, however, as to the naïve charm of the thing. All this simple, almost childlike display of natural affection is a thousand miles away from anything else in ancient art, and worlds above the stilted and affected conventions of the age, or indeed of most ages. Akhenaten and his wife and family loved one another, and were not ashamed to let their whole world know it ; which was surely all to the good.

The inscriptions, as well as the reliefs, bear witness to the tenderness of the union of the king and queen. She is never named without some endearing epithet. She is "Mistress of the King's happiness, Endowed with favours, at hearing of whose voice One (Pharaoh) rejoices, Chief Wife of the King beloved by him." She is "The Lady of Grace," "Fair of countenance" ; and one of the royal oaths was "As my heart is happy in the Queen and her children." One is not in the habit of regarding the palace as the place wherein to look for examples of wedded happiness, or of taking at their face value all the flattering phrases which are lavished on the family affairs of royalty ; but it must be admitted that Akhenaten's relations with Nefertiti make a pretty picture, and on the whole a convincing one. Should the Egypt

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

Exploration Society's excavators succeed in destroying it, so much the worse for the world; but it is not destroyed so far, and probably never will be.

The discussion of the relations between Akhenaten and Nefertiti has led us a little prematurely into the questions relating to the art of the Amarna Period in Egypt, and especially those developments of it which are characteristic of the new capital, Akhetaten. Not least remarkable of the effects which Atenism produced upon Egypt was the extraordinary change which was wrought, for a time, upon the attitude of the Egyptian artist's mind toward his material and towards the artistic tradition of his race. It would, no doubt, be a mistake to regard Atenism as "the only begetter" of what we now recognise as the art of the Amarna Period. Already, as early at least as the days of the great Queen Hatshepsut and of Thothmes III., one can see that a change is beginning to come over the spirit of Egyptian art. Something is being lost, and something is being gained. The tremendous power and dignity, austere and impressive, which characterises the best work of the Middle Kingdom, with its sense of almost ruthless force, is beginning, even in the early days of the empire, to be softened and transmuted, and to have a new spirit of grace and attractiveness breathed into it. This can be seen even in the case of sculpture in the round. In the great monumental work, such as the colossal statues, which ought, properly speaking, to be regarded not as portraiture, but as elements of a great architectural composition, power enough remains, as may be seen in the almost brutal force of the great head of Thothmes III. in the British Museum. Such work dominates everything around it,

The Amarna Age

as Thothmes himself dominated the ancient east. Even here, however, a change makes itself felt as the dynasty goes on, and the masterly quartzose sandstone head of Amenhotep III., in the same gallery, with not less dignity, shows more softness, and the attempt, at least, to realise a personality. But it is in the smaller and more natural work in the round that the change is most distinctly felt. Contrast the magnificent grey granite Senusert III. from Der el-Bahri, now in the British Museum, with the equally fine schist Thothmes III. of the Cairo Museum. Both statues are superb renderings of forceful personality; but the Middle Kingdom artist is austere to a degree in his rendering of the masterful character of Senusert. Every point which can give emphasis to the sternness of a somewhat hard and bitter personality is mercilessly emphasised, and in Senusert's hard-featured face you can read not only the consciousness, but also the bitter weariness of power. Thothmes is no less powerful, with his great beak of a nose; but the great soldier is smiling and complacent, his angularities are softened down, and the attractive contours emphasised. The materials used, in the older statue granite, in the latter schist, almost suggest the change in style of the two artists and their periods. Portraiture, then, is already, in the early XVIIIth Dynasty, beginning to shed something of its ancient austerity, and to acquire a suppleness and subtlety which were foreign to it before. This, however, without any marked loss in sincerity, or even in force. Egyptian art has few more uncompromising pieces of realism, and few more forcible, than the grey granite Amenhotep, son of Hapu, the wise man of the reign of Amenhotep III., now in the Cairo Museum.

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

Amenhotep was no beauty, and his sculptor wisely did not attempt to refine the ugly, capable features of the great man; but you will go far before you will find a more lifelike presentation of a shrewd and perhaps not unkindly man of the world, gargoyle though he be. Egyptian sculpture in the round, then, was already, before Akhenaten, shaping in the direction of a greater softness and suppleness of rendering, while, as yet, losing little, if any, of its force and interpretative power. We have already seen that the national type of face appears to undergo modification, at least in the upper classes, by the introduction of foreign elements; and a somewhat similar modification appears in the artistic rendering of the new type, as might also have been expected.

Relief work shows a similar tendency. Hatshepsut's reliefs at Der el-Bahri are perhaps the finest specimens of the older work of the empire in relief which are left to us, and even in them there is a suggestion of the breath of a new spirit. But by the time that we reach the reign of Amenhotep III., we find, in such work as the reliefs of the tombs of Khaemhat and Userhet, and even in some of those of Luxor, a delicacy and daintiness which the older work cannot show. One would not say that the artist was a better artist than his predecessor, for in some respects the older work is superior, but simply that he is becoming more at home with his material, is able to play with it, so to speak, and feels a correspondingly greater freedom in his work. Along with this goes, quite naturally, a readiness to deal with more complex arrangements in the setting out of a scheme of relief.

The tendency in the direction of greater freedom, and the acquisition of more dash and go in the representation

The Amarna Age

of a scene, combined with a greater naturalism, is even more markedly to be noticed in the painting work of the XVIIIth Dynasty. It is quite a mistake to speak as if the painted pavements of Akhenaten's palace at Akhetaten were the first attempts at naturalistic rendering of open-air life and action on the part of the Egyptian painter. The fluttering birds and butterflies from the ceiling of the palace of Amenhotep III., and the swimming ducks from its pavement, show that the artist of the time of Akhenaten's father could be as realistic, though not as complex, as his successor; but the tendency can be traced much further back than that. The birds rising from the marshes in the tomb of Amenemhat, the scribe in the reign of Thothmes III., are the manifest ancestors both of those of the palace of Amenhotep III. and those of the palace of Akhenaten. The scenes from the tombs of Nakht and Menna, and those in the British Museum taken from the tomb of Sebekhotep, all show the rapid growth of the spirit of freedom in representation. One of the British Museum scenes shows among other things two women with their faces turned full towards the beholder, a thing very rare in Egyptian practice; while for absolute realism it would be hard to beat the extraordinarily clever, though by no means beautiful, sketch from the tomb of Nakht, of a very lean and hungry cat eagerly devouring a fish. Dating probably from the time of Thothmes IV., these pictures show that forty years at least before the time of Akhenaten the Egyptian artist was reaching out towards a greater naturalism.

We see, therefore, that there is no ground for the belief that in the art of the Amarna Age there is a complete break with the old tradition of Egyptian art. The pro-

826



STELE OF HOR AND SUTI (pp. 311-2)

From the "Guide" to the Egyptian Galleries : Sculpture (British Museum)

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

cess of modification was not abrupt, but gradual, and had already been going on quite evidently for at least a century before Akhenaten ascended the throne. Just as Atenism itself did not spring up in a night, but had its roots to some extent far back in some of the most ancient Egyptian beliefs, so the art which went along with Atenism had its roots also in the past, and was not a phenomenon, but a growth. Growth, however, may be forced in the developments of the human mind as well as in the nature ; and the creed of Atenism, and especially that aspect of it which is continually emphasised in the king's attitude, supplied the forcing element in the art of the time. One of the titles which Akhenaten most frequently applies to himself is "Ankh-em-Maat," "Living in Truth," and he accepted the full meaning of the phrase as his guiding principle in life. "To him it meant acceptance of the daily facts of living in a simple and unconventional manner. For him what *was* was right, and its propriety was evident by its very existence." The influence of such a canon of life upon art could not fail to be great, and the development which was already taking place in Egyptian art was fostered and hastened by it to a very remarkable extent. On his tablet at Aswan, Bek, the king's chief architect and master-sculptor, describes himself as "the assistant whom his Majesty himself taught, chief of sculptors on the great and mighty monuments of the king." It does not necessarily follow from this statement that Akhenaten dabbled in art, and amused himself, and perhaps made himself a nuisance to his artists by designing objects for them to execute, as we have seen Thothmes III. doing, but simply that he indicated as a part of his religious teaching the fact that his canon of "Living in

The Amarna Age

Truth " was to be the guide of his artists, and left them to work the principle out.

The results are manifest in the extraordinarily realistic work of the age. Bek and Auta, Queen Tiy's sculptor, and the rest of the Amarna school, now found themselves, for the first time in the history of Egyptian art, with an absolutely free hand to " draw the thing as they saw it for the god of things as they are," untrammelled by the conventions which had been the dead hand lying upon Egyptian art in the past. The consecrated " hieratic " postures disappear to a great extent (not invariably), and the king and queen, the princesses and the courtiers, are represented, not as they ought to be in great moments, stifled in meaningless buckram of traditional dignity, but in their habit as they lived—often by no means a dignified habit, as we have seen in the case of the royal family at table.

It is chiefly in the representation of the human figure that the greatness of the change, advance or retrogression, as you choose to call it, is seen. In the case of other subjects, the change, while quite well marked, is by no means so extreme as is sometimes made out. Field life, for instance, had never been subjected by the Egyptian artist to the same iron trammels of convention which hampered his representations of the human body. From of old the painters and sculptors of the land had been realists in the depiction of the marsh, the river, and the desert, with all their wild life and their plants. Akhenaten's artists carried this ancient practice one stage further, so that it is something of an exaggeration to say, as Professor Breasted does, that " the result " (of Akhenaten's teaching) " was a simple and beautiful realism that saw more clearly

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

than any art had ever seen before." The older artists of Egypt were not blind to the facts of nature any more than Bek and Auta ; and if the Amarna Age had left us no specimens of its artistic work other than the pictures of wild life in plant and animal, we should probably never have realised that there was any break in the tradition. We should have recognised a legitimate advance, along lines already not unfamiliar, not a departure from the old paths.

It is entirely different, however, with the Amarna representations of the human figure, which are, of course, by far the most important things which the period has left us in an artistic sense. Here one can talk about "Amarna Art" with the consciousness that one is dealing with a distinct entity, with a life and individuality of its own. Men and women are now represented by the artist with a literalness, and consequently with a freedom of pose, and a truth of detail which are utterly foreign to the old art of the land. No longer do you get the figures posed in the scanty group of variations on a single theme which were all that were allowed by custom—left leg advanced, arms hanging down, fists clenched and so forth ; you get people sitting, standing, moving, lounging in every conceivable natural posture, and even sometimes in some which are inconceivable and unnatural. The finest specimen of this new freedom, so far as relief work goes, which has yet been discovered, is the wonderful little coloured relief now in the Berlin Museum, in which Akhenaten and Nefertiti are represented, as usual, together. The king stands, or rather lounges, in an easy and graceful posture, leaning on his staff, which is under his right arm. The long ends of his girdle, and the

The Amarna Age

streamers of his wig, float in the wind. In front of him stands Queen Nefertiti, in an attitude which can only be described as pert, holding in her left hand a bunch of fully-opened lotus flowers, and in her right a bunch of buds, which she is holding to her husband's nose, that he may sniff them. Her thin linen robes flutter in the breeze. Nothing but the royal *uraeus* on the front of Akhenaten's headdress, and the double *uraeus*, characteristic of queens' portraits of the period, on that of Nefertiti, would ever suggest that one was in the presence of the Pharaoh of Egypt, the greatest king on earth, and an incarnate god. The whole piece is one of the simplest and most charming things ever done in ancient art ; but it is at the opposite pole from the customary representation of a Pharaoh.

Most remarkable of all the fruits of Amarna art, however, are the portrait heads and statuettes of the period, of which the German Expedition to Tell el-Amarna discovered so many. The Egyptian portrait-sculptor is bit by bit gaining his rightful position as one of the great master-artists of the world—a position which a few years ago was scornfully denied to him. As late as 1911 so acute a critic of art as the late Mr. March-Phillipps could say without either shame or fear, "The emptiness of the Sphinx's face is a prevailing trait in all Egyptian sculpture. All Egyptian faces stare before them with the same blank regard which can be made to mean anything precisely because it means nothing. . . . The truth is, Egyptian sculpture is a sculpture barren of intellectual insight and intellectual interest." Even on the evidence then extant, this was an utterly unjustifiable criticism ; but one imagines that so keen a judge of the beautiful would have made a speedy recantation of his heresy had



ADORATION OF THE ATEN BY THE ROYAL FAMILY (*p.* 318, *note*)

Note the absence of the Ankh from the hands of the solar rays.

From N. de G. Davies's "*Rock Tombs of El Amarna*" (*Egypt Exploration Society*)

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

he seen the wonderful series of heads which is now in the Berlin Museum. The heads are mostly those of the royal family—several portraits of Akhenaten himself, mostly in limestone, statuettes of Queen Nefertiti, of extraordinary realism, little heads of the princesses, of astonishing charm, and likenesses of some of the court circle, among them two heads which may be those of Ay, the successor of Akhenaten at two removes, and his wife Tiy. The gems of the whole wonderful series, however, are two heads of Queen Nefertiti. Of these, the one in painted limestone has won world-wide recognition as one of the most exquisite examples of early sculpture in existence ; and it well deserves its reputation. Nefertiti herself must have been an unusually beautiful and graceful woman, and the sculptor, Bek or another, has risen to the height of his opportunity. For delicacy of modelling, and for pensive grace of expression, this bust is unsurpassed in ancient art, and the Egyptian sculptor might safely stake his reputation in this sort on this charming piece of work. Less known, and, because of its material and its condition, apt to make a feebler appeal at first sight, the companion bust of the queen, in brown sandstone, is actually almost as fine a piece of work. The two together make a matchless pair, and one feels, looking at them, that for once a great historic reputation for beauty has been amply justified.

Almost equally characteristic of the Amarna school, though not found at Tell el-Amarna, and equally worthy of admiration, is the tiny head in ebony and gold which was found in the Fayum, and is now associated in Germany, where it has found its resting-place, with Queen Tiy. Its characteristics have been touched upon

The Amarna Age

in the discussion of the queen-mother. No more astonishing piece of character study was ever accomplished by any artist, ancient or modern. Beauty is not the word which one could use in describing it ; but the impression which it makes of forceful and possibly suffering personality is remarkable. The head measures only a few inches in height ; but it is a greater work of art than most colossi.

It is on its work in connection with the human subject, therefore, that the art of the Amarna Age must base its claim to originality and power ; and there can be no question that on the facts that reputation is amply justified. Unfortunately, however, the really noble qualities of the art have been to some extent obscured, and the work of the whole school has been prejudiced by one unlucky peculiarity. Whether this peculiarity was due to Akhenaten's exaggeration of the virtue of intellectual and artistic honesty, and his insistence on a sort of "paint-me-with-my-warts " attitude or not, it is impossible to say. We know that the king was abnormal. Even if we had not the pictures and statues of the court sculptors and painters, his death-mask would suffice to prove this. It would seem that among the features of his abnormality were an unusual development of the cranium, and an equally unusual over-development of the lower part of the body and thighs. Professor Elliot Smith has suggested that these abnormal features are characteristic of the uncommon, but recognised, disease from which he believes the king to have suffered. Whether this be so or not, it is certain that Akhenaten insisted, as one would have expected, on being portrayed absolutely without flattery, in all the unloveliness of his

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

abnormal development. As invariably happens in such a case, the features insisted upon were exaggerated as time went on, and the unlucky process can be traced in its growth throughout the royal portraits of the reign. It is scarcely likely that Nefertiti and the royal princesses all suffered from the same defects as the king; indeed, the charming little limestone torso of one of the princesses, now at University College, London, is sufficient proof that she at least did not; but the bad habit of insistence on the king's peculiarities led to the creation of peculiarities of a similar type where they did not exist, and both the queen and the princesses are often duly represented with this most ungainly over-development, which we may be reasonably certain that they did not possess. Finally, the ugly fashion spread, as one would expect, to the courtiers, and there apparently was a mania for being made as ungainly as possible, in imitation of his Majesty, who, poor soul, could not help it. The consequence is that, with all its merits, a good deal of the Amarna art comes, as Dr. Hall has said, "perilously near to caricature."

In all this there was a double misfortune. An art which in itself was really fine, perhaps the finest flower of the Egyptian genius, was made to appear ridiculous through its exaggerations; and as a consequence, when Atenism was overthrown, there was a revulsion from the eccentricities which obscured the really great qualities of the Amarna art which to a great extent destroyed originality in Egyptian art for the rest of its history. Terrified at the results of their lapse into truth and naturalism, the Egyptians for the remainder of the national story clung for dear life to the stereotyped style of the old orthodox days,

The Amarna Age

as if salvation lay in it alone. In the XIXth Dynasty there is still much good work, bearing in its earlier days the unmistakable mark of el-Amarna on it; in the Saïte Period we have a wonderful recrudescence of good work on ancient lines, together with a truthfulness in portraiture worthy of Akhenaten's artists; but never again the "first fine careless rapture" of the time when Akhenaten taught his servants to look at life and things with their own eyes, and not through the medium of a bleared old convention.

Though the city of Akhetaten was essentially a religious creation, which owed its existence and maintenance to the fact that it was the headquarters of the new faith and of the court, and was really a Holy City, it had also to depend, to a certain extent, and so far as regarded the lower classes of its population, on its manufactures. What the character of these should be was determined to a great extent by the conditions under which the city was created. A great town which was practically to grow up like Jonah's gourd (and to perish almost as speedily), and which was to find a place in its circuit for many temples and shrines, the huge palace of the king, and the mansions of all the nobles of the court, with the tombs and the tomb-chapels which were as much a necessity of Egyptian life as the houses of the living, obviously created a demand for a vast amount of decorative work; and what the character of this work should be was determined by the prevailing taste of the time. Apart from the universal taste for relief work and distemper painting, which was a feature of the art of Egypt in all ages, this taste ran largely in the direction of the use of coloured frits (faïence), and coloured glass for decorative purposes.

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

Manifestly it was a simpler and easier business to establish manufactories of the glazed frits and glasses on the spot, than to procure the work from distant and often hostile sources. Accordingly, one of the features of life in Akhet-aten was the establishment of a number of manufactories, where the work of making the glazed frits and coloured glass was carried on; and the surviving specimens of both show that under the impulse of the new art tendencies the art of producing coloured glazes and glass was pursued with great success. "A variety and a brilliance was attained which was never reached in earlier or later times. So far as the use of glazes is possible, this period shows the highest degree of success, and the greatest variety of application."

Excavation has revealed the sites of at least two large glazing works and a number of glass factories. The actual work-rooms of these manufactories have practically vanished; but their waste-heaps still show in their fragments the nature of the processes employed; while hundreds of pieces of glass vases and other objects show the character of the finished products. Some of the objects for which coloured glass was employed seem to our taste illegitimate. "Whole statues of glaze," for instance, scarcely seem to come within the definition of art, as we understand it; and here, and in other instances which will fall to be noticed in their own place, the taste of Akhenaten's time seems to have been defective; but there can be no question of the decorative merit of the wealth of colour which was used in the form of glazes for the adornment of the houses of the nobles, and the royal palaces and temples. Some of the most beautiful specimens of the glassmaker's craft which are in existence

The Amarna Age

come from this period, such as the ewer of turquoise blue, decorated with chevrons of white and dark blue, and the four-handled vase of lapis-lazuli blue, with waves of yellow, white, and light blue, in the collection of the late Lord Carnarvon, and the drinking-cup of pure turquoise blue which is now in the Metropolitan Museum of New York. For absolute gorgeousness, it would be hard to beat some of the decorative details of Akhenaten's palace, where coloured glazes were employed, with a lavish use of gold, for the decoration of the palm-leaf capitals of the columns. "The capital," says Sir Flinders Petrie, "was a copy of the favourite cloison work of the Egyptian jewellers, in which minute segments of rich stones were set each in a fitting nest of gold, so as to produce a brilliant device, in which every spark of colour was separated from the next by a line of gold . . . here the jeweller's design was boldly carried into architecture on the large scale, and high capitals gleamed with gold and gem-like glazes." The effect of a range of such columns must have been almost overpoweringly rich, and while the practice almost seems to go beyond the limits of what our colder taste would approve, there can be no question of its impressiveness under the brilliant light of an Egyptian sun. More than ever, to the astonished eyes of an Asiatic envoy, it would appear certain that gold was in the land of Egypt as dust. Pharaoh was not always so lavish, however, as in such instances, and in the columns of the entrance-hall of the Paradise of Maru-Aten a cheap imitation of these sumptuous capitals was employed; the cloisons were filled with coloured paste, instead of glaze, and the edges of their borders were painted yellow instead of being gilded.

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

The craftsmanship of the period is well illustrated in the fine specimens of furniture which have been found in the tomb of Iuaa and in that of Tutankhamen. In design, Egyptian craftsmanship at this time was generally (not invariably) irreproachable ; the workmanship is admirable. Again, to our minds, the prevailing fault seems to be a tendency to over-sumptuousness. The wood of chairs and other articles is often smothered in gold plating, and is often covered with stucco modelled in relief; and the coffers are richly adorned with semi-precious stones and coloured glazes. While the decoration strikes a modern eye as sometimes too pictorial to be fitting under the conditions of use for which the object was created, there is no doubt that such things as the famous throne of Tutankhamen, and some of the coffers from the same tomb, and the coffers and caskets of the tomb of Iuaa, are singularly beautiful pieces of design and equally fine as examples of workmanship.

Lapses from good taste occur in all periods of art, and the Amarna Age was not immaculate in this respect. Anything more hideous than the great gilded state couches of the tomb of Tutankhamen it is impossible to imagine, and the much-bepraised alabaster vases made all in one piece with their stands, and decorated with naturalistic designs of Nile plants, with blobs of obsidian stuck into them, are as flagrant specimens of vulgarity as any of the early Victorian pieces of wax-flowers and fruit, or spar and soapstone vases ; but, on the whole, the taste of the Amarna Age, while it is not our taste, preserves in its luxuriousness an instinct for beauty and fitness in which few periods have matched it. Particularly dainty was the development at this time of the small art which finds

The Amarna Age

expression in the design and execution of articles for personal adornment and for the use of the toilet-table. The ointment spoons and vessels, the mirrors and mirror-cases, the combs and other such trifles, carved in foreign woods or in ivory, or wrought in bronze, alabaster, or steatite, are often works of art as well as of use ; and there are perhaps few things which so simply and strongly impress upon the eye and mind the sense of the fact that the Egyptians of 1400 B.C. were quite as highly cultured as any modern race, as do such little things, with their evidence of the delight of a race in the beautiful. The small intimacies of a culture are often not the least significant testimony as to its character and quality.

We have already noticed the influence of Asiatic ideas which began to enter Egypt with the conquests of the early Pharaohs of the dynasty, and have suggested that in the direction of design the result of the importation of Syrian models and workmen in the time of Thothmes III. and onwards was by no means for good. Syrian influence is not important, so far as can be judged, in the Amarna art, though Syrian pottery occurs with a fair amount of frequency. Much more important is the matter of how far Egypt may have been influenced by Minoan models, where she was brought into contact with a far more living and attractive style of design and execution. Late Minoan pottery was freely imported into Egypt during the Amarna Age, probably from Rhodes or other of the Ægean islands, or from the mainland of Greece, as by the time of Akhenaten's accession Knossos had newly suffered eclipse. Minoan stirrup-vases and wine-strainers were quite popular in Egypt at this time, and were imitated by the Egyptian craftsmen in faïence, alabaster, and metal.



A COURTIER'S TOMB, TELL EL AMARNA
From N. de G. Davies's *"Rock Tombs of El Amarna"* (Egypt Exploration Society)

The City of the Horizon and Its Art

It is possible that in the return to nature which is characteristic of the Amarna art, and in the greater freedom and suppleness of handling which the artist allows himself, we may trace something of the spirit of Minoan art, which is always unhampered by tradition, and a law unto itself. But even this was only one element among many—a spirit breathing into a personality already existent and conscious of its own power and its own bent ; it was never even the shadow of the imposition of an alien taste upon minds which were receptive because they were blank. The culture of Egypt was too big a thing, too ancient and too truly national, to be moulded by any external influence. The Egyptian knew a good thing when he saw it, and had not the least objection to adopt it ; but he had always the power of true genius to make his borrowings, even when he did borrow, which was not often, essentially his own.

“The el-Amarna development,” says Dr. Hall, “was of native origin, and its naturalism is Egyptian in spirit, though it is not to be denied that there is a probability of considerable influence from Minoan Greece, the isles of Keftiu, making for freedom and unconventionality.”

Such, then, was Akhenaten's new “City of the Horizon,” with its temples, palaces, mansions, and busy manufacturing quarters, standing fair and white in the midst of its holy domain, where no influence of evil should enter. North and south, where the cliffs drew close in to the river, lay its guard-stations and patrol-posts, where Pharaoh's soldiers jealously scrutinised every wayfarer, and ascertained his fitness to enter the sacred place before they allowed him to pass. Behind, in the valleys of the Arabian hills, the workmen were busy hewing out and adorning the wonderful tombs which were destined for

The Amarna Age

the resting-places of the courtiers when their time came, that they might still be companions of their king, when he was buried, as he had sworn to be, within the precincts of his own Holy City—tombs which few of them were ever to occupy. Up in the high desert, behind the city, in a deep cup in the hills, lay the crowded little village where the necropolis working-staff was housed, in houses which are closely enough packed together, but fairly roomy and comfortable. All around, over the heights of the rock amphitheatre, the patrol roads ran across the desert, ceaselessly trodden by the guards whose double duty it was to see that no profane person polluted the tombs, or stole into the city to work mischief or to excite disaffection, and that none of the necropolis staff, weary of their narrow bounds, stole away across the desert. It was to be an—

“Island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns,”

A wonderful Dream-City; only, perhaps unfortunately, perhaps not, this is not a world of dreams, though they have their share in the making of it; and Akhetaten was altogether too peaceful and beautiful, too unpractical, in a word, to be allowed to endure long in a world of strife.

CHAPTER IX

THE FAITH OF AKHENATEN—ATEN-WORSHIP

WHAT was the faith for which Akhenaten upset the whole ancient order of things in Egypt, and for whose sake he risked, and in the end lost, an empire? We have seen in Chapter VII. that it had three outstanding characteristics, and that, of these, two were by no means new things in Egyptian thought, but were natural growths—the first out of the conditions which followed the growth of the empire under the conquering Pharaohs of the XVIIIth Dynasty, the second out of ideas which had lain in the Egyptian mind for a very long period, in fact for almost as long as there had been an Egyptian nation at all. The thought of a god who should be narrowly national, or indeed even less than national, a purely local god, obviously was entirely unsuited to a people which was beginning to be conscious of its imperial heritage; and when Egyptian thought turned to seek a divinity who should be adequate to fill the new rôle of the god of the empire, as distinguished from the god of the Nile Valley or of a section of it, such a being was found at once in one of the aspects of the Sun-god, whose worship in Egypt was already of such ancient date, and was also the nearest approach to universalism in religion that the Egyptian mind had attained. Following upon this, the next step was tolerably plain, and demanded no sudden departure from processes of thought which had gradually been growing familiar; and Akhenaten took it, strictly

The Amarna Age

in the line of a logical development, when he proclaimed that his god was not only more than a local or national deity, not only an imperial one even, but a universal god, by whom all things consisted and were maintained, and to whom worship was due from all creatures, animal or human.

It is evident, therefore, that Atenism was not the sudden break with all the religious past of Egypt which it is often represented as being ; nor was there anything especially novel in the exaltation of the Sun-god as the object of worship. The process of solarisation in religion had been going on for many centuries, and did not cease, but only took another form, with the successive rises of local divinities to prominence, as the seat of government shifted with changing conditions. Ptah of Memphis or Amen of Thebes might assert predominance in the Egyptian Pantheon, as Memphis or Thebes became the seat of the ruling dynasty ; but the root idea of a solar god never failed to impose itself upon the new supreme god, and even Amen, in all the pride of the supremacy of Thebes, had to assimilate himself to the ancient faith, and to become Amen-Ra, another aspect of the Sun-god. Side by side with this general acceptance of solar worship as a fundamental thing in Egyptian religion went another equally remarkable strain of religious thought, and all through the process of solarisation was paralleled by that of Osirianisation. The reason for this parallel development of two very diverse aspects of religious thought lies in the natural conditions of life in the Nile Valley. "As we examine Egyptian religion in its surviving documents," says Breasted, "it is evident that two great phenomena of nature had made the most profound impression upon



HEAD OF AKHENATEN

Note the abnormal development of the skull (p. 294)

From Fechheimer's "*Die Plastik der Ägypter*" (Cassirer)

The Faith of Akhenaten

the Nile-dwellers and that the gods discerned in these two phenomena dominated religious and intellectual development from the earliest times. These are the Sun and the Nile. In the Sun-god, Re, Atum, Horus, Khepri, and in the Nile, Osiris, we find the great gods of Egyptian life and thought, who almost from the beginning entered upon a rivalry for the highest place in the religion of Egypt—a rivalry which ceased only with the annihilation of Egyptian religion at the close of the fifth century of the Christian era. He who knows the essentials of the story of this long rivalry will know the main course of the history of Egyptian religion, not to say one of the most important chapters in the history of the early East."

Osiris, the god at first of the overflowing Nile, and therefore in the beginning an object of terror, as we know from very early texts, then gradually, as men learned to bridle and use the inundation, a god of beneficence, of growth and abundance, becomes naturally in the end the god of the Resurrection, and as such finally claims in Egyptian religion a place of even greater importance than his secular rival of the Sun. But the time for the assertion of the claims of Osiris as not only a national god of life after death, but a universal one, was not yet, and Egyptian thought, in its search for a divinity adequate to the needs of the hour, had to turn away from a god who as yet made a strictly local or national appeal to one who appealed to all men of every land. The Nile with its phenomena of the life-giving flood and the consequent resurrection of nature was a local phenomenon, and as such was ruled out for the time. The religious thinkers of Egypt turned to the ancient rival of Osiris, the

The Amarna Age

Sun-god, who under one or other of his various aspects had been the object of adoration in Egypt as far back as we can trace any records at all.

The centre of the ancient Sun-cult of Egypt was Heliopolis, a city which lay close to the ancient Memphis and the modern Cairo. It is probable that this ancient centre of religion was for a time, before the Ist Dynasty and the founding of Memphis, the political centre of the newly united Egypt; at all events it was the centre of the cult of Ra-Atum, the Sun-god, and the King of Egypt was high-priest of the god, and was regarded as his embodiment. The early prestige thus gained by Heliopolis was never lost, even in the days of the supremacy of Amen of Thebes; the college of priests of Heliopolis was regarded as the most learned in Egypt, and it was the Heliopolitan system of religious thought (so far as there can be said to be any system of Egyptian religious thought) which was most generally accepted throughout the land. The Heliopolitan type of temple and of ritual was early adopted by the devotees of other local gods; and the fact that the Pharaoh, who was first and foremost the high-priest and embodiment of Ra, was also in theory the high-priest of every other god of the land, must inevitably have tended in the direction of an assimilation of all the cults to the solar one. By the time of the rise of the Vth Dynasty the power of the solar cult was so great that apparently the priests of Ra succeeded in placing their nominee upon the throne. The Vth Dynasty is a priestly one, and henceforth to the end of Egyptian history each Pharaoh bears as his proudest title the name Son of Ra.

In the earliest view of this great god, however, there is nothing of universality. He is expressly stated to be

The Faith of Akhenaten

the ruler and defender of Egypt alone, who bars his own land against the entrance of all other peoples. Thus, in the earliest extant Hymn to the Sun-god we have his functions described as follows :

" He permits thee (Egypt) not to hearken to the Westerners,
He permits thee not to hearken to the Easterners,
He permits thee not to hearken to the Southerners,
He permits thee not to hearken to the Northerners,
He permits thee not to hearken to the dwellers in the midst
of the earth.
But thou hearkenest unto Horus.

The doors that are on thee stand fast like Inmutef,
They open not to the Westerners,
They open not to the Easterners,
They open not to the Southerners,
They open not to the Northerners,
They open not to the dwellers in the midst of the earth,
They open to Horus.
It was he who made them,
It was he who set them up."

In this early stage of the Sun-god's cult he was regarded as loving righteousness and hating iniquity, and as indeed being the fashioner of righteousness ; and the idea is carried to such a point of literal acceptance of the fact that he is said to "feed on righteousness," as Hapi, the Nile-god, feeds on fish ! Consequently the god demanded righteousness from all his worshippers, and at this stage he holds the place which in later days, with the progressive Osirianisation of the Egyptian creed, was held by Osiris himself, as the Judge of the Dead, who weighs righteousness in a balance. In view of the curious absence from the doctrines of Atenism of the ethical element, a fact to which we shall have to return, this early instance of insistence on righteousness as a feature of the

The Amarna Age

Sun-god's character is noteworthy, and the later dropping of the stress is somewhat of an anomaly.

In the time of the Middle Kingdom the favourite conception of the work of the god was that of "the Shepherd of his people, with no evil in his heart," and again we see in this epithet this insistence upon the righteous aspect of the god, which disappears in the new presentation of him in Atenism. It was now, when Theban princes, the Mentuhoteps and Senuserts and Amenemhats, were ruling over Egypt, that we find the hitherto unimportant local god of Thebes, Amen, being identified with the generally accepted Sun-god, and taking for the first time the compound name Amen-Ra; and henceforward, and especially after the rise of the XVIIIth Dynasty and its conquests, Amen, under his new name, becomes increasingly the supreme god of Egypt, much to the disgust, no doubt, of the priestly colleges of Heliopolis and Edfu, and the other ancient centres of Sun-worship.

Indeed it seems not unlikely that one of the causes leading to the recrudescence of solar worship which culminated in the reforms of Akhenaten was the jealousy of these other priestly bodies of the unbounded power and influence which the Theban god was now attaining, and the consequent aggrandisement of his priesthood at the expense of the more ancient religious corporations. In telling of the reign of Thothmes IV., it was pointed out that the evidence for the theory that Thothmes was not originally destined for the kingship is simply the statement on the stele between the paws of the Great Sphinx that the throne was promised to the prince as a reward for his devotion in clearing the great statue from the sand which was covering it. While this state-

The Faith of Akhenaten

ment seems very slight evidence on which to rest a theory of disputed succession to the throne, it is not unlikely that it does represent an attempt on the part of the king to restore the Heliopolitan god to a position of greater prominence and power than he had been holding since the usurpation of the supreme place by Amen; and we may perhaps see in this incident one of the first moves in the direction of the substitution of Sun-worship for the ruling cult of Amen.

It is in this connection, and not in the fancied but quite erroneous idea of a connection between the Egyptian Aten and the Syrian Adon, that we may perhaps look for the traces of Asiatic, or rather East-Aryan, influence upon the minds in Egypt which were working in the direction of a reinstatement of the Sun-god in the supreme place, or rather of the establishment of a modified and universalised form of the ancient creed. The wife of Thothmes IV., and the mother of Amenhotep III., was the Mitannian princess whom we know by her Egyptian name of Mutemuya. Among the Mitannian gods who are called to witness the treaty between Shubbiluliuma and Mattiuaza and Biashshi-ilim are "ilani mi-it-ra-as-si-il, ilani u-ru-wa-na-as-si-il, ilu in-dar, ilani na-sa-ti-ia-an-na" (The gods Mitrashshil, the gods Uruwanashshil, the god Indar, the gods Nashatianna), and these are none other than the well-known Indian deities Mithra, Varuna, Indra, and the Nasatya Twins. The solar and celestial character of these Aryan gods of Mitanni has not a little in common with the solar character of the Heliopolitan cult. Some of the Mitannian proper names—Shuwardata, for instance—familiar to us from the Amarna letters, tell us of the worship of Surya, the Aryan

The Amarna Age

Sun-god ; and, as we shall see, there is a possibility that the most characteristic emblem of Atenism, the radiating arms of light ending in hands which bestow life, may have been derived from the characteristics of Surya.

One is left, therefore, with the practical certainty that as early as the times of Thothmes IV. there was at least the possibility of a distinct movement, within Egypt itself, and supported by the throne, in the direction of a return to a form of the old solar cult, and of this movement from within being buttressed and to some extent guided in the form which it should adopt by Aryan influence in the shape of the beliefs and observances of the Mitannian Queen of Egypt, Mutemuya, and her Aryan entourage. The reign of the king was too brief, and the position of Amen as yet too assured, for much to have been accomplished. Amen had still to be acknowledged even in such a matter as the filiation of the Crown Prince, and the priests of Amen succeeded in securing the publication of the regular doctrine that Amenhotep III. was the actual son of Amen, who had occupied the form of Thothmes IV., and begotten the new Pharaoh ; but we can scarcely doubt that the heaven was working both from within and from without, and that the minds of the most influential members of the court circle, at all events, were turning towards the conception of a universal god, who should be not a glorification of the upstart god of Thebes, whose priests were becoming intolerable in their arrogance, but a universalised, and perhaps (though this is doubtful) spiritualised, version of the oldest of Egyptian gods, adorned with some of the attributes which Mitannian theology had assigned to its Sun-god.

Manifestly, therefore, the new faith which was to work

The Faith of Akhenaten

so disastrously on the material interests of Egypt had its roots deep in native soil, and could be traced as far back as you can trace anything in the history of the land. Far from being a cataclysmic interference with the ancient order, Akhenaten's creed might claim to be a legitimate development of the oldest form of Egyptian worship, a natural adaptation of it to the altered conditions of empire. Further, while what has been said indicates the possibility of foreign influence in the shaping of the form which the creed should take, it ought to be carefully noted that such influence can only have been of the nature of encouragement given to tendencies already existing, or of embroidery on a native fabric. It is perhaps too much to say, as Dr. Blackman does, that "there are no traces whatever of such influences"; but at most their power must have been comparatively small, and was limited to non-essentials. The ideas which came from Mitanni, if we allow them to have entered the Egyptian mind, did not need to force an entrance; they were only pushing an already opened door, and if they added a touch of symbolism to the thoughts of the young king about his god, the thoughts were still Egyptian and not Mitannian.

The progress of the new ideas about the old god, seen in the reign of Thothmes IV., became more marked in the reign of his son, Amenhotep III., the father of Akhenaten. From the stele of the twin brothers Hor and Suti, the architects of Amenhotep III., now in the British Museum, we have such phrases used in describing the Sun-god as "Sole lord taking captive all lands every day," while the old idea of the god as the shepherd of his people is once more insisted upon—"A mother, profitable to gods and men, a craftsman of experience, valiant

The Amarna Age

herdsman who drives his cattle, their refuge and the giver of their substance." "It is evident in such a hymn as this," says Breasted, "that the vast sweep of the Sun-god's course over all the lands and peoples of the earth has at last found consideration, and the logical conclusion has also followed. The old stock phrases of the earlier hymns, the traditional references to the falcon, and the mythological allusions involved, have not wholly disappeared, but the momentous step has been taken of extending the sway of the Sun-god over all lands and peoples." Just as the idea that Jehovah might conceivably have an interest in the men of Egypt and Babylon, of Philistia, and Tyre and Ethiopia, began to dawn, as a wonderful surprise, upon the narrow exclusiveness of the writer of the 87th Psalm, so in this hymn of the twin brothers we see the dawning of the idea that their Sun-god was not, as their fathers had told them, the god of Egypt alone, but of all the earth. Even more remarkable is the fact that already in this hymn, which is professedly "A hymn to Amen when he riseth as Horus of the Two Horizons," we find such a phrase as this: "Hail to thee, *O Aten of the day*, thou Creator of mortals and Maker of their life"! The appearance of the title "*Aten of the day*" in a hymn addressed to the god who was destined to be the deadliest enemy of Atenism is an indication of how gradually men were being led along a road which was to bring them to ends very different from anything which they had anticipated, and how little their minds were yet opened to see all the implications of the new ideas which were making their way into use.

We saw in our sketch of the reign of Amenhotep III. the significance of the name which was given to the royal

The Faith of Akhenaten

barge in which Amenhotep and Tiy sailed upon their pleasure-lake. Even more significant, however, is the fact that on one of the blocks of stone which Horemheb re-used in the building of his pylon at Karnak (*cf.* Eрман, "Handbook," Fig. 47) there is a figure of the Sun-god in the form of the falcon-headed Horus, bearing the full Atenist title of "Horus-of-the-Horizon, rejoicing in his horizon, in his name of Shu-who-is-in-the-Aten." The royal figure associated with that of the god bears the cartouche of Akhenaten, "Nefer-kheperu-Ra," but the cartouche has been altered in ancient times from that of his father, Amenhotep III. Two things are shown by this significant alteration: First, the same confusion of thought which we have already seen in the stele of the brothers—a feature which was not confined, however, to the time of Amenhotep III., but endured for awhile during that of his son. The second matter is of more moment. The fact that the cartouche was originally that of Amenhotep III. shows that already in the reign of Akhenaten's father there must have been a building of the nature of a shrine at Thebes, in which the king was represented as worshipping the new deity, not, indeed, in his fully developed form or absence of form, but at least with his new titles. Akhenaten's temple to the Aten at Thebes, therefore, was not an absolutely new departure, but an advance upon a structure which his father had created.

Thus, then, it is proved to demonstration that Akhenaten's faith was not a violent interruption of the existing theological thought of Egypt, a new creation thrust upon the people, but an advance upon a process which had been going on for years, perhaps for generations. Wherein, if this is true, does the king's originality come in? What

The Amarna Age

credit are we to assign to him as a theologian? And, especially, what was the reason for the extraordinary conflict which his reforms brought on between Atenism and the other creeds? The answer to these questions seems to be, in the first place, that Akhenaten's originality consists in the fact that he, and he alone of all the thinkers who had been exercising their minds on the idea of a universal god, fully realised the fact that implicit in that idea is monotheism. Up to this point the advanced theologians of Egypt had been talking monotheism without recognising the fact, just as Molière's M. Jourdain had been talking prose and didn't know it. "It can be seen," says Dr. Blackman, "that the religious thought of the period just preceding the reign of Akhenaten was distinctly monotheistic in its tendency. It was only necessary to advance this tendency a step or two further to arrive at actual monotheism. This is what Akhenaten did when he asserted definitely once and for all that the Sun-god was not only the supreme and universal god, but also the only God—an assertion that had never been definitely enunciated by the theologians who had preceded him, but had only been sporadically and somewhat vaguely hinted at by them."

Put in this fashion, it may seem as if Akhenaten's contribution to the development of the conception of God is diminished to a very small quantity indeed, and as if his originality practically vanishes. This, however, would be to take a superficial view of the case. What it amounts to is really this—that the thinkers previous to Akhenaten had been fumblers, who blundered round a great idea without realising that a great discovery lay under their hands; Akhenaten was the man of clear vision and

The Faith of Akhenaten

decisive apprehension who opened at once the door round whose handle they had been fumbling. Or, to take Tennyson's way of putting it :

“One would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string ;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there ;
And last the master-bowman, he
Would cleave the mark.”

Unfortunately for himself, and probably also for his country, Akhenaten had apparently one of those minds which are too remorselessly clear, and lack the atmosphere which renders tolerance of imperfect human thought and practice possible. Seeing clearly that the universality of his god meant monotheism, he saw also that with his rigid devotion to truth there could be no room for tolerance of the easy-going old cults of the other gods. If he was to be true to his convictions, he could not permit the worship of beings whom he knew to be what the Hebrew called “No-gods” ; and it was his proclamation of the fact that the Aten was “a jealous god,” and his insistence on utter faithfulness to the ideal of “god-alone,” which wrecked his life-work, and set back the clock of religious progress in his land. It was perhaps a noble fault ; but undoubtedly it was a fault ; and both king and country had to pay for it. Theoretically, intolerance should be right, granted that it is perfectly certain that you have all the truth on your side ; practically it is the root of some of the most deadly and abominable things on earth—inquisitions and inquisitors, and all the rest of an unlovely herd. And so Akhenaten's lofty thoughts about a loving father of all men came down at last to the chipping out of the honoured names of good men who never had had a

The Amarna Age

chance of knowing the great god in whose name their tombs were insulted, and finally to the chipping out of his own, and the banning of him as "that criminal of Akhetaten."

Until quite recently, it has been generally held that, in addition to the credit for originality which is due to Akhenaten for his perception of the fact that universalism implied monotheism, he must be credited with being the first to make religion a spiritual thing, on the assumption that the god of his worship was not the actual physical Sun, but the vital force which works through the visible sun. "It is evident," says Breasted, "that what the king was deifying was the force by which the Sun made himself felt on earth." "However evident the Heliopolitan origin of the new state-religion might be, it was not merely Sun-worship; the word Aten was employed in place of the old word for god (*neter*), and the god was evidently conceived to be far more than the merely material sun. The king was evidently deifying the light or the vital heat which he found accompanying all life." "It is a subtle title," says Erman, speaking of the full title of the new god, "which undoubtedly should be interpreted in its abstract meaning, that it was not the actual planet that was worshipped, but the being who manifests himself therein." Sethe, however, followed by Blackman, has maintained recently that the interpretation of the title of the divinity hitherto accepted is entirely wrong, that in the place of "Splendour which is in the Aten," or "Heat which is in the Aten," we must accept the literal form, "Shu which is in the Aten," and conclude that Akhenaten was referring not to the vital force behind the sun-disk, but simply to the sun-disk itself. In other words, the

The Faith of Akhenaten

charge is now brought against Akhenaten that, instead of having given to his country a more spiritual conception of divinity than that formerly held, he forced upon it a much more materialistic view of the Sun-god than that which his countrymen had held for untold ages. "It was the actual cosmic body," says Dr. Blackman, "the physical sun itself, not a mysterious power incorporated in it or working through it, which Okhnaton made his subjects worship."

If this be true, it is evident that Akhenaten's contribution to the progress of religious thought is reduced to a very trifling matter, and indeed on this point is a minus quantity. Shortly we shall have to look at the utterances in which the new faith found expression, and to consider whether they can be reconciled with this very dingy view of Atenism. Meanwhile one obvious criticism suggests itself. If this were all that Atenism meant, and Akhenaten's god were nothing else than the actual disk of the sun, what was all the fuss about on both sides? On Akhenaten's side, for if he was only worshipping the solar disk, why should he quarrel with people who wished to worship other natural forces or agencies? Why, for instance, should Khonsu, the Moon-god, and the Son of the Theban Triad, have been proscribed, or Hapi, the god of the Nile? And, on the other hand, why should the nation have made such a to-do over what was only a command to worship more intensely the old familiar disk of the sun which they had been worshipping for ages? The contention is that the revolt was against the materialism of Akhenaten's new creed, as compared with the spirituality of the old Heliopolitan view. "Okhnaton's materialistic conception of the Aten was entirely opposed to the

The Amarna Age

much more spiritual conception of the Sun-god formulated by the theologians of the old religion ;” but remembering the character of the mythology attaching to the old solar religion, it is difficult to take such a contention seriously. There may have been an esoteric spiritual doctrine of the Sun-god, but there can be little doubt that the actual god of the people’s worship was just as material as, on this supposition, Akhenaten’s god was, and that the priesthood would never have got any support in their hostility to Akhenaten’s view from the nation, had the difference between old and new been no more than this. The people would have left the priests to “distinguish and divide a hair ’twixt south and south-west side,” and would have worshipped Akhenaten’s new god without seeing any difference between him and their old favourite.

Along with his new conception of divinity, whether spiritual or material, Akhenaten finally adopted a distinctive symbol to express the being who was to be adored. In the earlier stages of the cult this symbol has not made its appearance, and the god is represented by the familiar figure of the human hawk-headed Ra-Horus, his head surmounted by the solar disk with the *uraeus*. Before the migration of the court to Akhetaten, however, the new symbol makes its appearance. It takes the shape of a solar disk, from which descend rays of light, terminating in human hands, some of which hold the “Ankh,” the emblem of life, as if bestowing it upon the worshippers.*

* It should be noticed that the hands in which the Aten’s rays terminate do not always hold the *Ankh*. Perhaps the representations as frequently show them without this emblem as with it. In this case the hand must be regarded as the emblem of the generally beneficent power of the deity, bestowing blessings, guiding and strengthening his children. The symbol is, of course, perfectly

The Faith of Akhenaten

The royal *uraeus* is also retained, sometimes hanging down from the disk, more frequently rising up from the bottom of it towards its centre—a survival which probably signifies that the new god was not only the world-god, but also the world-king. “It was a masterly symbol,” says Breasted, “suggesting a power issuing from its celestial source, and putting its hand upon the world and the affairs of men.” From one point of view the adoption of this symbol may seem to lend weight to the suggestion that the object of Akhenaten’s adoration was simply the material disk of the sun ; but a more spiritual interpretation of it is by no means impossible, and seems much more likely. For with the adoption of this symbol all other representations of the god were forbidden. Akhenaten believed, in the fully developed form of his doctrine, as surely as St. Paul, that “we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto silver or gold or stone, graven by art and man’s device.” It is difficult to believe that, if his god were simply the material thing which some suppose it to have been, Akhenaten would have taken the trouble to proscribe the familiar figures by means of which the Sun-god had been pictured to his ancient worshippers.

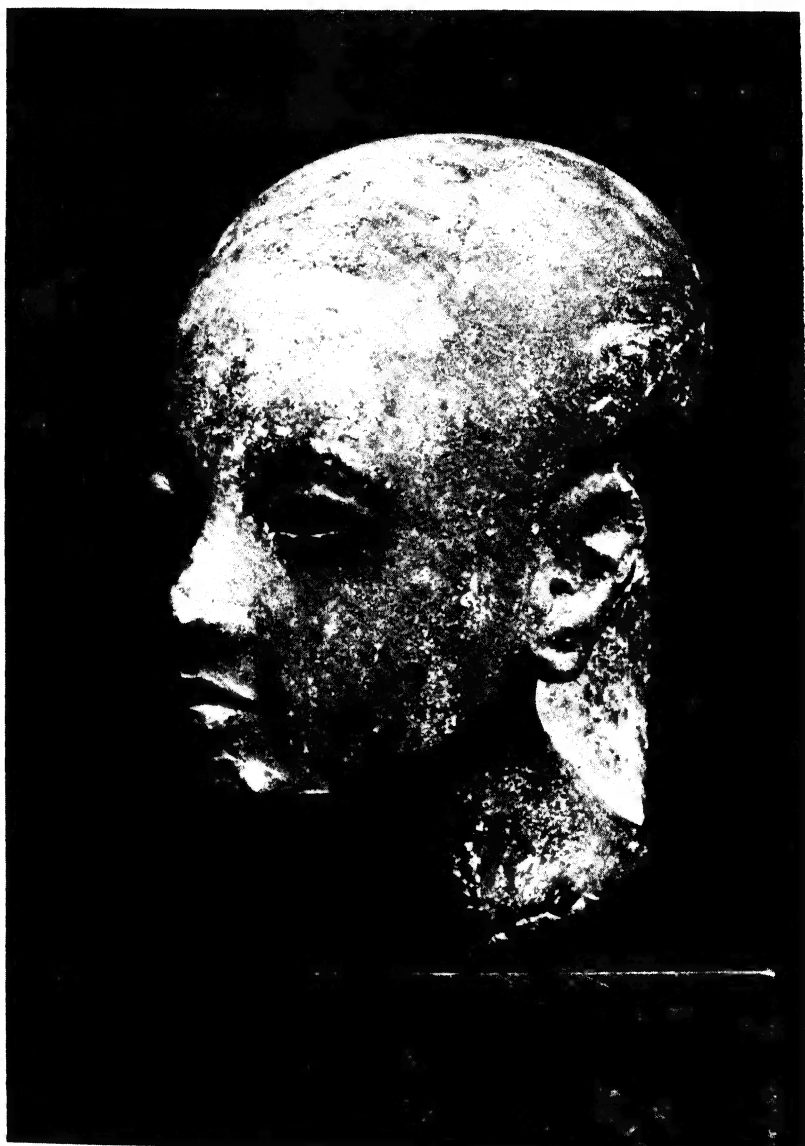
It is in connection with the life-giving rays of the disk that the suggestion has been made of the direct influence of Aryan ideas of divinity upon the symbolism of the new faith. The Aryan Sun-god appears in his rising and

familiar in Egyptian religion. Compare, *e.g.*, the well-known figure from the pyramidion of Hatshepsut’s obelisk, of Amen bestowing blessing upon the queen by the laying on of hands. Compare also the continual use in Hebrew religion of the idea of “the hand of the Lord” as the source of all blessing and strength, and the immense growth of ecclesiastical symbolism which has developed therefrom.

The Amarna Age

setting as Surya, in his full strength as Savitri, "the golden-eyed, *the golden-handed*, and golden-tongued." "As the vivifier and quickener, he raises his long arms of gold in the morning, rouses all beings from their slumber, infuses energy into them, and buries them in sleep in the evening" (Wilkins, "Hindu Mythology"). The functions of the Aryan god correspond very closely with those which are ascribed to the Aten in the Amarna hymns, and the symbolism of the Aten figure resembles remarkably the description of the outstretched arms of the Sun-god. It must be remembered, however, that the functions described are such as would naturally occur to any mind intent upon the wonder of the vivifying power of the sun, and, further, that the idea of the arms of the Sun-god as his effective agents on earth is no new one in Egypt, but goes as far back as the Pyramid Texts. "The *arm* of the sunbeams is lifted with King Unas." On the whole, while the correspondence of the symbolism is an interesting coincidence, it need not be any more, and we are not entitled to claim it as a proof of direct Mitannian influence upon the new creed, though no doubt the Mitannian element at the Egyptian court welcomed the familiar emblem.

The substance of Akhenaten's beliefs with regard to his god is contained in the two famous Hymns to the Aten, which are found engraved on the walls of some of the tombs at Tell el-Amarna. These hymns, of which one is considerably shorter and less perfect as a piece of composition than the other, have been generally ascribed to the king himself, and there is probably no adequate reason for refusing to accept the attribution. It has to be remembered, however, that while the shorter hymn is definitely attributed in some of the copies to Akhenaten,



HEAD OF ONE OF AKHENATEN'S DAUGHTERS (*pp.* 272-3, 294-5)

From Fechheimer's "Die Plastik der Ägypter" (Cassirer)

The Faith of Akhenaten

there is no such attribution of the longer one to the king, though the phraseology of the introduction to the hymn may be interpreted as implying the royal authorship. The resemblances between the longer hymn and the great nature-psalm of the Hebrew Psalter, the 104th, have been frequently noted, and are indeed sufficiently striking. Again, it has to be considered that such ideas as occur in both poems are natural to men of all lands and times in contemplation of the wonders of nature and life, and that there is no need to imagine that there was borrowing on the part of the later author, who in all probability did not know that there was such a place as Akhetaten, much less that there were such hymns as those to the Aten. To say of the 104th Psalm, as one Egyptologist has done, that "there seems considerable likelihood that he (*i.e.*, Akhenaten) is the author in the first instance of this gem of the Psalter," is simply to talk nonsense; while the same author's elaboration of the idea, to the effect that "almost all Egyptologists agree that Akhenaten was the original author of the 104th Psalm" is not in the least in accordance with fact. "You shall find, in the comparisons between Macedon and Monmouth, that the situations, look you, is both alike. There is a river in Macedon; and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth;" but all the same Macedon and Monmouth are two separate and independent places. Man wakes with the morning and goes forth to his labour, returning at evening; the wild beasts seek their prey at night, and the fish disport themselves in the deep, alike in the hymn of Akhenaten and the Hebrew psalm, as they have done ever since there were eyes to note their doings. It is putting a low estimate on human capacity to suggest that there was

The Amarna Age

such poverty of mind in the ancient east that Akhenaten had to hand down a rough draft of the future psalm to eke out the barrenness of the Hebrew intellect in the matter of praise to the Creator.

The shorter and inferior hymn to the Aten is less frequently quoted than its greater companion, and therefore it may be worth while to give it for purposes of comparison. The version given is that of N. de Garis Davies ("Rock Tombs of El-Amarna," iv), with a few slight modifications :

"An adoration of (the living Horus of the Two Horizons, who exults on the Horizon) (under his name of Shu-who-is-in-the-

Aten)), who gives life for ever and ever, *by the King who lives in Truth, Lord of the Two Lands, Nefer-kheperu-ra-Ua-en-ra, the Son of the Sun, who lives in Truth, Lord of Diadems, Akhenaten, great in his duration, who gives life for ever and ever.*

"Thy rising is beautiful, O living Aten, Lord of Eternity ! Thou art radiant, fair, and strong ; thy love is great and large ; thy rays make vision for all that thou hast created. Thy surface gleams, giving life to hearts, and thou fillest the Two Lands with thy love, O god to be adored, who himself formed himself, who made every land, and created all that is upon it ; both mankind, and all the herds and flocks, and the trees which grow on the ground. They live when thou dawnest upon them. Thou art mother and father for those whose eyes thou hast made. When thou dawnest, they see by means of thee ; thy rays illumine the entire land. Every heart exults at seeing thee, when thou risest as their lord.

"Thou settest on the western horizon of heaven ; they lie down as do those who die. Their heads are wrapped up, their nostrils are stopped ; until thou dawnest in the morning on the eastern horizon of heaven. Then their arms are outstretched in praise to thy *Ka*. Thou givest light to hearts by thy beauty, and there is life.

"When thou sendest thy rays, every land is in festival ; the singers, musicians, and chorus are joyful in the court of the house of the *Benben*, and in every temple in Akhetaten, that perfect place with which thou art well pleased, and in which food and fat things are offered.

The Faith of Akhenaten

"Thy son is pure, doing what is well pleasing to thee, O living Aten, in his appointed processions.

"All that thou hast made leaps before thee; thy honoured son exults, his heart is in joy, O living Aten, rejoicing in heaven every day! He hath given birth to his honoured son, Ua-en-ra, like unto him without ceasing.

"The Son of the Sun, upholding his beauty, Nefer-kheperu-ra-Ua-en-ra, saith, I am thy son, satisfying thee, upholding thy name. Thy might and power are firmly fixed in my heart. Thou art the Living Aten, and eternity is thy portion. Thou hast made the far-off heaven that thou mightest dawn therein, that thou mightest see all that thou hast made. Thou art Thyself Alone, but infinite vitalities are in thee to give thy creatures life. It is breath to their nostrils to see thy rays.

"All flowers bloom; the plants of the waste lands thrive at thy dawning (*cf.* Isa. xxxv. 1: 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose'); they drink themselves drunk before thy face. All cattle gambol upon their feet; all the birds rise up from their nests, and flap their wings with joy, and circle round in praise of the Living Aten. . . ."

Short and simple as this hymn is in comparison with the more familiar one, it has its own charm and appeal, arising from the very simplicity and directness of the pictures which it presents. It gives in a few sentences the theme which is more fully elaborated in the longer version. It should be noted, however, that, with the exception of the two references to "every land," there is nothing to emphasise the universality of the Aten in this hymn, and indeed the stress is rather laid on his local beneficence, his goodness to the Two Lands, and the joy of his festivals in Akhetaten. This is in strong contrast, as we shall see, to the stress laid in the longer hymn on the universal goodness and beneficence of the Aten.

The longer hymn, unfortunately, proved too long to be so often copied in the tombs of el-Amarna as was its shorter companion, and only one version has survived,

The Amarna Age

of which about a third has been destroyed by the vandalism and cupidity of the modern natives, so that for the lost portion our only source is a somewhat hasty and inaccurate copy made a generation ago. The priceless original was inscribed upon the walls of the tomb (never occupied) of that "Divine Father Ay" who was Akhenaten's Master of the Horse and Royal Fan-bearer, and who afterwards seized the sceptre for a short time during the reaction, only to be thrust aside by the soldier Horemheb. Whether Ay had any share in the composition of the hymn of which he has left us the sole copy we do not know, and never shall, in all probability. It is, as already mentioned, a fair, but by no means a certain inference from the phraseology of the introduction that Akhenaten may have been the author of it also, as well as of the shorter hymn whose authorship is plainly claimed for him.

The hymn is as follows—the version given is due to Professor Breasted, who was the first to point out that resemblance of the old Egyptian psalm to the 104th Psalm of the Hebrew Psalter, which has since been so mercilessly exploited:

"Thy dawning is beautiful in the horizon of the sky,
O living Aton, beginning of life!
When thou risest in the eastern horizon,
Thou fillest every land with thy beauty.
Thou art beautiful, great, glittering, high above every land,
Thy rays, they encompass the lands, even all that thou hast made.
Thou art Re, and thou carriest them all away captive;
Thou bindest them by thy love.
Though thou art far away, thy rays are upon earth;
Though thou art on high, thy footprints are the day.

"When thou settest in the western horizon of the sky,
The earth is in darkness like the dead;
They sleep in their chambers,

The Faith of Akhenaten

Their heads are wrapped up,
Their nostrils are stopped,
And none seeth the other,
While all their things are stolen
Which are under their heads,
And they know it not.
Every lion cometh forth from his den,
All serpents they sting.
Darkness . . .
The world is in silence,
He that made them resteth in his horizon.

"Bright is the earth when thou risest in the horizon,
When thou shinest as Aton by day,
Thou drivest away the darkness.
When thou sendest forth thy rays,
The Two Lands are in daily festivity,
Awake and standing upon their feet
When thou hast raised them up.
Their limbs bathed, they take their clothing,
Their arms uplifted in adoration to thy dawning.
Then in all the world they do their work.

"All cattle rest upon their pasturage,
The trees and the plants flourish,
The birds flutter in their marshes,
Their wings uplifted in adoration to thee.
All the sheep dance upon their feet,
All winged things fly,
They live when thou hast shone upon them.
The barques sail upstream and downstream alike.
Every highway is open because thou dawnest.
The fish in the river leap up before thee.
Thy rays are in the midst of the great green sea.

"Creator of the germ in woman,
Maker of seed in man,
Giving life to the son in the body of his mother,
Soothing him that he may not weep,
Nurse even in the womb,
Giver of breath to animate every one that he maketh!
When he cometh forth from the body . . . on the day of his
birth,

The Amarna Age

Thou openest his mouth in speech,
Thou suppliest his necessities.

“ When the fledgling in the egg chirps in the shell,
Thou givest him breath therein to preserve him alive.
When thou hast brought him together
To the point of bursting it in the egg,
He cometh forth from the egg
To chirp with all his might.
He goeth about upon his two feet
When he hath come forth therefrom.

“ How manifold are thy works !
They are hidden from before us,
O sole God, whose powers no other possesseth.
Thou didst create the world according to thy heart
While thou wast alone :
Men, all cattle large and small,
All that are upon the earth,
That go about upon their feet ;
All that are on high,
That fly with their wings.
The foreign countries, Syria and Kush,
The land of Egypt ;
Thou settest every man into his place,
Thou suppliest their necessities.
Every one has his possessions,
And his days are reckoned.
The tongues are diverse in speech,
Their forms likewise, and their skins are distinguished.
For thou makest different the strangers.

“ Thou makest the Nile in the nether world,
Thou bringest it as thou desirest,
To preserve alive the people.
For thou hast made them for thyself,
The lord of them all, resting among them ;
Thou lord of every land, who risest for them,
Thou Sun of day, great in majesty.
All the distant countries,
Thou makest also their life,
Thou hast set a Nile in the sky ;
When it falleth for them,

The Faith of Akhenaten

It maketh waves upon the mountains,
Like the Great Green Sea,
Watering their fields in their towns.
How excellent are thy designs, O lord of eternity!
There is a Nile in the sky for the strangers,
And for the cattle of every country that go upon their feet.
But the Nile, it cometh forth from the Nether World for
Egypt.

Thy rays nourish every garden ;
When thou risest they live,
They grow by thee.
Thou makest the seasons
In order to create all thy work :
Winter to bring them coolness,
And heat that they may taste thee.
Thou didst make the distant sky to rise therein,
In order to behold all that thou hast made,
Thou alone, shining in thy form as living Aton,
Dawning, glittering, going afar and returning.
Thou makest millions of forms
Through thyself alone ;
Cities, towns and tribes, highways and rivers.
All eyes see thee before them,
For thou art Aton of the day over the earth.

Thou art in my heart,
There is no other that knoweth thee
Save thy son Ikhnaton.
Thou hast made him wise
In thy designs and thy might.
The world is in thy hand,
Even as thou hast made them.
When thou risest they live,
When thou settest they die ;
For thou art length of life of thyself,
Men live through thee,
While their eyes are upon thy beauty
Until thou settest.
All labour is put away
When thou settest in the west.

The Amarna Age

Thou didst establish the world,
And raise them up for thy son,
Who came forth from thy limbs,
The King of Upper and Lower Egypt,
Living in Truth, Lord of the Two Lands,
Nefer-khepru-Re, Wan-Re,
Son of Re, Living in Truth, Lord of Diadems,
Ikhnaton, whose life is long ;
And for the Chief Royal Wife, his Beloved,
Mistress of the Two Lands, Nefer-nefru-Aton, Nofretete,
Living and flourishing for ever and ever."

Breasted's version does not give the introduction to the hymn, and it is added here as it contains the only passage from which it may be inferred that the hymn is the work of Akhenaten : " A Hymn of praise of Harakhti, the living one | exalted in the Eastern Horizon in his name of Shu-who-is-in-the-Aten |, who liveth for ever and ever, the living and great Aten, he who is in the Sed Festival, the Lord of the Globe, the Lord of the Disk, the Lord of Heaven, the Lord of Earth, the Lord of the House of Aten in Akhetaten, of the King of the South and the North, who liveth in Truth, Lord of the Two Lands, Nefer-kheperu-Ra-Ua-en-Ra, the Son of Ra, who liveth in Truth, Lord of Diadems, Akhenaten, great in the duration of his life, and of the Great Royal Wife whom he loveth, Lady of the Two Lands, Nefer-neferu-Aten, Nefertiti, who liveth in health and youth for ever and ever." It will be seen that so far as the inference goes with regard to the authorship of the hymn, there is nothing in the phraseology used which would not permit us to include Nefertiti as joint author with her husband—a view which has not been maintained by anybody.

The Faith of Akhenaten

With regard to this great hymn, whose charm and power few will deny, one preliminary observation must be made on a point to which it seems that sufficient attention has not been paid. This hymn, with its shorter companion, forms practically the sole source of whatever knowledge we possess about the content of Atenism as a religious system. When, therefore, the absence from it of any ethical outlook is noted, as it cannot fail to be, judgment as to the absence of an ethical system from Akhenaten's conception of his god must be restrained by the manifest fact that we have so little material from which to judge. It is perfectly true that the attributes of righteousness and justice are nowhere ascribed to the Aten in the hymn; but it by no means follows that these thoughts were absent from the fully developed creed. Suppose, to take an exactly parallel example, that we were obliged to form a judgment of the ethical content of Hebraism from that 104th Psalm which has already been referred to, alone. What could we say, but that there is hardly any more evidence in the psalm that the god of the Hebrews is a god of righteousness than there is in the Egyptian hymn? Only a single verse, and that not inconceivably an interpolation, makes the slightest reference to the divine judgments upon sin; the whole of the rest of the psalm is as purely a glorification of the divine beneficence in nature as is the case with Akhenaten's hymn. The absence of ethical content from the Aten hymns must be admitted, but along with the admission must go the acknowledgment that we do not know enough about the matter to say that this omission is a characteristic of the creed as a whole. It has often been remarked that while Atenism

The Amarna Age

apparently failed, it seemingly left as a residuum in the Egyptian mind a consciousness of sinfulness, and a conception of personal piety almost entirely lacking in earlier religious thought in Egypt; and it is hard to see how a faith without ethical content could ever have done this.

Apart from such vexed questions, few will deny the quality of the hymn. Only blindness or prejudice could ever say of it that "if we examine the hymn line by line, and compare it with the hymns to Ra, Amen, and other gods, we find that there is hardly an idea in it which is not borrowed from the older Egyptian religious books." To such a criticism it is sufficient to reply with another equally enlightened judgment—"The words are the same; it is only the arrangement of them that is different." On which basis Shakespeare and Martin Tupper stand on exactly the same level. It is quite sufficient to compare the Aten hymn with the "good typical example" of a hymn to the Sun-god which Sir Wallis Budge quotes from the Papyrus of Ani immediately after his rendering of Akhenaten's song of praise to see what a gulf there may be between two pieces whose fundamental ideas may be by no means dissimilar. Akhenaten's hymn is poetry and piety—the other is manufacture.

The chief points of interest in the hymn are three. First, the remarkably vivid expression which is given to what Hebrew Scripture would call "the loving-kindness of the Lord." It is what Scripture again would call a "constraining love," drawing the nations of the world to the Creator of all good.

"Thou art Re, and thou carriest them all away captive;
Thou bindest them by thy love."

The greatness of the divinity is no bar to his nearness to his creatures—

The Faith of Akhenaten

" Though thou art far away, thy rays are upon earth ;
Though thou art on high, thy footprints are the day."

While the care of the Highest for the smallest of his creatures is expressed in terms which suggest at once the words of Jesus about God and the sparrows—

" When the fledgling in the egg chirps in the shell,
Thou givest him breath therein to preserve him alive."

Combined with this expression of the tenderness of God towards his creatures, goes an extraordinarily vivid sense of the joy of life in all created beings. Not that this is altogether a novelty in Egyptian thought, which always cherished a profound love of open-air life and sense of its charm ; but the expression of this in Akhenaten's hymn has a vigour and freshness not often found elsewhere. " The mere living " is in itself a joy—

" The birds flutter in their marshes,
Their wings uplifted in adoration to thee.
All the sheep dance upon their feet,
All winged things fly,
They live when thou hast shone upon them,"

and the simple delight in life finds a peculiarly naïve utterance in the picture of the chick newly hatched strutting about in the sunlight, exulting in being alive—

" He cometh forth from the egg
To chirp with all his might.
He goeth about upon his two feet
When he hath come forth therefrom."

Last, and perhaps most notable, is the expression of the thought of God for all men of every land. Akhenaten gathers up all the consciousness of his age of the universality of God's care, setting even first in his verse the care of the Aten for the foreigner, as though to

The Amarna Age

him that were even more wonderful than his care for Egypt—

“The foreign countries, Syria and Kush,
The land of Egypt;
Thou settest every man into his place,
Thou suppliest their necessities.”

Wonderful was the provision which the Aten had made for Egypt in his gift of the life-giving Nile-flood ; but

“All the distant countries,
Thou makest also their life,
Thou hast set a Nile in the sky ; . . .
How excellent are thy designs, O lord of eternity !
There is a Nile in the sky for the strangers,
And for the cattle of every country that go upon their feet.
But the Nile, it cometh forth from the Nether World for Egypt.”

If it be true after all this goes no further than nature-worship, and that we are conscious of the lack of the deeper elements of religion, it is also true that seldom will you find a purer or more beautiful expression of the sense of the divine goodness and tenderness than is given in these hymns of Akhenaten. “All this,” says Breasted, “discloses an appreciation of the revelation of God in the visible world such as we find a thousand years later in the Hebrew psalms, and in our own poets of nature since Wordsworth.”

So far, then, the hymns carry us, and no further. The attempt to read more into them than they contain has resulted in equally unwarrantable depreciation of the very appreciable contribution which they make to an aspect of religious thought which is by no means negligible. If Akhenaten's utterance of his sense of the glory and goodness of his god is to be described as materialistic, at least it is a very charming and gracious materialism to which he

The Faith of Akhenaten

introduces us ; and indeed one feels that materialism is much too hard and heavy a term to apply to anything so pure and gentle. Even material things can be approached from a spiritual angle ; and this, one feels, is precisely what Atenism does in its surviving utterances.

There may have been much more in the king's faith than what his hymns have told us of it ; and it is difficult to believe that the king, whose motto was " Living in Truth," confined his vision to material things exclusively, and was blind to the weightier aspects of the subject on which he thought so much. We do not know, and probably never shall.

A matter of supreme practical importance with regard to Akhenaten's faith was that, if we may judge from his actions and inactions, he was in nothing more original than in this—that his creed ruled his conduct. Other men believed, and guided their lives by standards quite inconsistent with their beliefs, as men have done in all ages : Akhenaten believed, and ruled his life by his beliefs—a point on which most people will probably judge that he showed much more originality than in his contribution to theology. It was apparently one of the fruits of this strange consistency of the king which proved by far the most disastrous consequence of his movement, at least as regards the imperial position of Egypt. One pretty obvious implication of a faith in a god who is both universal and loving is that to such a being strife between his creatures, of whatever lands, must be hateful. If God loved all men, then equally there ought to be no place among his creatures for the race hatreds and jealousies which mean war. Accordingly, to all appearance, judging from his action, or rather want of action, in a great

The Amarna Age

emergency, the logical Akhenaten became the first pacifist, and a pacifist who had the power to insist on his ideas being carried into effect by the greatest empire of the ancient world, at one of the most critical periods of world-history, with results which we shall have to trace in our next chapter.

One more point which falls to be noticed in connection with the cult of the Aten is that of the structure of its temples, and the worship which was carried on in them. The representations of the temples of Akhetaten which have survived show us that, if our interpretation of the Egyptian artist's perspectiveless designs is correct, the Aten temple in its main lines followed the normal type of the Egyptian temple; but with several very significant differences, some of which lead us very far back in Egyptian temple architecture, while others are entirely novel. In order that we may understand some of the features in which Akhenaten's temples differed from the typical temple of the XVIIIth Dynasty, we have to carry our minds back to the Sun-temples of the Vth Dynasty at Abusir and Abu-gurab, erected during the period when Sun-worship had asserted its dominance and set its nominees upon the throne of Egypt. The Sun-temple of this period differed very widely from anything which preceded it or followed it in Egyptian architecture. A small portico-temple gives access, as in the case of the pyramid-temples, to a covered causeway, which leads up to a raised platform, suggesting rather Babylonian than Egyptian building practice. On this platform stands the temple proper, which consists simply of a great open court, girdled by an enclosure wall, on the inner side of which are ranged the store-chambers for the cultus-objects.

The Faith of Akhenaten

Access to this court is given, not by the customary pylon, but by a roofed portico, which projects considerably beyond the girdle-wall, and is in itself a complete building. At the extreme end of the open court stands the emblem of the Sun-god, in the shape of a great obelisk ; but an obelisk of a very abnormal type. It consisted of a truncated pyramid, with a base of about 130 feet, and a height of from 60 to 100 feet. On the top of this rose the true obelisk, a squat brick erection, only about three times as tall as its breadth at the base and rising to a height of about 120 feet. Before this ugly mass, which may possibly have been a copy of the holy Benben stone at Heliopolis, stood a huge altar, or rather table of offerings, where the gifts of the worshippers were laid before the god in the open court.

The feature of this ancient type of Sun-temple which Atenism borrowed was the open court in which the daily ritual of the god took place. In other respects, the Aten temple differed considerably from its ancient forerunner, and approached more closely to the normal type of its period.

The great Aten-temple of Akhetaten was surrounded on all sides by a high wall, which was single towards the front, but on the other three sides was double, leaving space between the walls for a narrow ambulatory, to which access was given by two small gates, one at either end of the front wall. The girdle-wall was pierced in the centre of its front by a great gateway, whose double door was flanked by the two lofty towers of a pylon, with its flag-staves and pennons. While in this respect the temple follows normal practice, it should be noted that, if the pictures are correct, the Aten pylons differ from the

The Amarna Age

ordinary Egyptian pylon in that the towers have none of the "batter" otherwise universal in Egyptian gate-towers, but are perfectly vertical. This gateway admits to a large open court which surrounds the actual temple building on all sides. Two-thirds of the way along its length, this court is crossed by a boundary wall dividing it into two unequal sections, in each of which stands a temple structure. Just inside the gateway, two villas stand within the court, doubtless those of officials of the temple, and by the left-hand wall of the court, near the entrance, is the slaughter-house. All along the wall of the court on either side stand tables of offerings, each with its loaves, its joint of meat, and its bowl of burning incense. Ranged between the back of the first temple and the partition-wall which divides the court into two parts are eight oblong tanks or lavers, for purposes of lustration.

In the centre of the court stands the actual temple. Its façade is formed by an imposing pylon, along the front of which runs a colonnade with a double row of columns, four on either side of the gate; and the towers of the pylon are adorned each with five tall flagstaves, from which float red pennons. Passing through the gate of this pylon, the worshipper enters the first court of the temple, open to the sky, and surrounded on three sides by little chapels or storehouses, filled with materials for offering. The centre of the court is occupied by the great altar, a square erection with panelled sides, a cavetto cornice, and a series of rounded projections forming an edge, and serving to retain the offerings. (The horns of the altar?) This altar is approached by a flight of broad steps, nine in number, and is piled high with offerings and flaming censers, on which the king and queen sprinkle



RELIEF SCULPTURE, EL AMARNA (Chapter VIII)
From Fechheimer's "Die Plastik der Ägypter" (Cassirer)

The Faith of Akhenaten

more incense ; and around it are lavers for the purification of the celebrants. Another gateway leads into a narrow court, which seems to serve merely as a vestibule to the more important court which follows it. This, the third of the courts of the greater sanctuary, is crossed at its upper end by a colonnade of sixteen columns ranged in two groups of eight, but later views show it colonnaded on all sides, making it into a regular peristyle court, and it is possible that this represents a later change of plan. Beyond the colonnaded court, another narrow forecourt gives access to the first of the remaining two courts of the great temple, which, like its predecessor, is open and unadorned, with rows of magazines round its sides, and an altar in the middle. Here the greater building ends, and in order to gain access to the smaller temple which lies behind, the worshipper has to retrace his steps to the main pylon, and to find his way through the external court to the gate of the partition-wall dividing the two structures from one another.

Passing this gate, we enter another open court, in the centre of which stands the lesser temple. On the left-hand side of the court, close to the gate, stands a large stele with a rounded top. It is supported by a pedestal, and is approached by a stair or ramp. It is possible that this is the representation of the sacred Benben, in which case it has been considerably reduced in size and altered in shape since the days of the huge and ugly brick obelisk of the Vth Dynasty temples. Beside it sits a statue of the king, possibly in black granite, as it is coloured black in one of the representations, though no fragments of a black granite statue were found. Here, again, at one side of the court, are a villa and the

The Amarna Age

slaughter-house of the temple. The space on the right of the gateway is occupied in some pictures by a choir led by a harpist, and in others by a choir led by a guitar-player. Both singers and players are blind.

The façade of the lesser temple consists of a tall pylon, faced, as in the case of the larger building, by a colonnade two rows deep; only, as this temple is narrower, there are only two columns in each row on either side of the gate. In front of each column is placed a statue of the king, bearing the crook and scourge, and wearing in one row the crown of the South, and in the other that of the North. He is accompanied by small statues of a woman, who may be either Queen Nefertiti or the Princess Meritaten, who is known to have had a shrine in this temple. Passing the columned pylon and a narrow corridor, one enters an open court with magazines ranged round its sides; and in the midst of this court stands another great altar, heaped with offerings. Finally, after another narrow corridor, comes a small shrine, separated from the rest of the temple and of unknown use.

On the whole, then, the Aten temple, while it resembled the Vth Dynasty temples in the fact that its courts were all open to the sky, and the normal XVIIIth Dynasty temple in its arrangement of pylons, its colonnaded forecourt and its grouping of royal statues, differed from both, and created a new type. The main feature is that worship of the god is carried out entirely in the open. In the normal empire temple, save for the altar in the open colonnaded forecourt, worship is a thing carefully screened from the vulgar gaze, and even, in its intimate details, from the light of day. From the brightness of the forecourt you pass to the dim religious light of the

The Faith of Akhenaten

hypostyle hall, and from that to the blank darkness of the sanctuary, broken only by the dim light of the lamp of the officiating priest who opened the holy shrine, and performed the daily toilet and refection of the image of the god. In the Aten temple there was no image, and therefore no sanctuary in the ordinary Egyptian sense ; and there was no need for all the numberless acts of secret ritual which accompanied the daily toilet of the god. All was in the open, and under the direct rays of the Sun who was the outward emblem of the god who was adored. So the colonnades, instead of being overpowering gulfs of darkness, are only intervals of shade between the brilliantly sunlit courts, in the centre of each of which smokes the altar, while the celebrant, king or priest, performs his act of worship openly before all men. Whatever may have been the other merits or demerits of Atenism, the faith of Akhenaten may surely have this set to its credit—that it substituted a sane and healthy love of light and publicity for the dark courts and secret rites of the older cults.

The ritual of the temple was, of course, simplified by the abolition of the *cultus*-image with the elaborate series of rites associated with it. The ritual of the Aten consisted mainly of the singing of hymns, and the offering of gifts of meat and drink, with abundance of perfumes and flowers. The main feature of it, on the occasion of a royal visit to the temple, seems to have been the consecration of the offerings by the king, acting as supreme high-priest, an act in which he is accompanied by the queen. This consecration is accomplished in the regular time-honoured fashion of Egyptian ritual, by the stretching out over the altar of the *Kherp* baton. The supreme act

The Amarna Age

was preceded by lustration and by the burning of incense on the part of the celebrant.

Music had a prominent place in the worship. In addition to the customary sistrum, which may perhaps by courtesy be called a musical instrument, and which was rattled by priestesses during the celebration, the royal princesses often leading in this act, there was a regular temple choir of blind vocalists and instrumentalists, which evidently performed more or less throughout the whole day ; and there was also a staff of male chanters and female musicians, who sang during the consecration of the offerings. It should be noted, however, that in spite of the advanced views of Akhenaten, the female musicians are never represented as performing within the actual precincts of the temple. Their place was outside the entrance-gate, where they beat tambourines, waved palm-branches, and otherwise accompanied the acts of worship which were going on within the court. Everywhere the ritual seems to have been beautified with masses of flowers. This, of course, is no new feature of Egyptian religion, for one of the engaging characteristics of the ancient Egyptian in all ages is his love for the beauty and the scent of flowers, and he carried this into the worship of his gods all through ; but under Atenism this charming feature of the ancient worship is emphasised and extended, as one would naturally have expected.

Such, then, so far as evidence of its character has survived, was the new faith which Akhenaten endeavoured to substitute for the tangle of legends and the scores of gods of his empire. Without claiming for it all that has been so confidently claimed by some, and so bitterly denied by others, it seems that a faith so simple, so pure,

The Faith of Akhenaten

and, in spite of the accusation of materialism, so open to the development of spirituality, if not in itself spiritual, might have been expected to meet with a more kindly reception than was accorded to it. The reasons for the failure of what on the face of it appears to be an immense advance upon previous religious systems in Egypt have been so well stated by Professor Peet that this chapter may well close with his summing-up of the matter.

“Why did Ikhnaton's attempt fail? It failed for two reasons. In the first place, it lacked that spirit of compromise with the established religion which was an indispensable condition of successful change in Egypt. That the Sun-god should be worshipped under a new name, and a new form, was in itself little or nothing ; but that Amon should be suppressed, his temples lie idle, and his name be erased from the monuments, was more than Egypt had stood or would stand. In the second place, the movement failed because the new religion was of a purely contemplative character, absorbing its votaries to the exclusion of all other employments, whether political or diplomatic. While Ikhnaton and his court were singing hymns to the sun, an empire was being lost to Egypt in Asia, and we have but to read the great decree of Harmhab, the first king of the restored religion, to realise the extent to which Egypt had become disorganised internally during the heresy.”

Unfortunately, these two points were of the essence of the faith ; and no compromise on either of them was possible for the king. We have to trace in the next chapter the disastrous external results of his consistency.

CHAPTER X

THE COLLAPSE OF THE EGYPTIAN EMPIRE AS SEEN IN THE AMARNA LETTERS

WE turn now to the results of Akhenaten's new creed, with its consequent foreign policy, or lack of policy, upon the great empire which had been left to the king by his predecessors, and which, even before his accession, had gradually been falling into a condition which needed careful handling and strenuous action. The situation in Egypt's northern provinces—Palestine, Syria, and Phœnicia—may be roughly compared to our own position as overlords of India. In both cases there is an empire originally gained by the sword, but held under conditions which are by no means stringent as regards the subject peoples. In both a great part of the administration is still carried on by the native princes, who have certain responsibilities with regard to their suzerain power, but have a certain amount of liberty of action within their own borders, controlled where necessary by Egyptian or British residents ; and in both the plan has been adopted of training the younger generation of native rulers in the knowledge and the ideals of the supreme power—with only a moderate amount of success. And in both, while the foreign yoke presses as lightly as may be upon the necks of the subject states, its mere presence is in many cases resented, and there is an ever-present tendency to favour any movement which might result in its removal, and a constant ferment of intrigue with powers which might

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

conceivably prove helpful in the accomplishment of this desirable end, without any very clear comprehension of what the ultimate consequences of such an overturn might be. If we were to picture to ourselves an India in something of its present condition of ferment, and add to the picture the idea of an united and aggressive Russia moving steadily southwards under an irresistible impulse towards expansion, and using as its tools for the preliminary weakening of British power a constant system of intrigue with the border states, Afghanistan, Tibet, and the rest—intrigue aimed at the stirring up of strife between the border states and the Indian Empire, and the cutting off by the border states of outlying salients and dependencies of the empire, we should have a rough, but not inaccurate, idea of the situation as regards the Egyptian Empire in Asia and its relations with the other powers in contact with it.

For the hypothetical Russia, we have the Hittite Confederation under Shubbiluliuma, set on its ideal of southward expansion: for the border states, we have the Amorite tribes under their able and crafty chiefs, Abdashirta, Aziru, and Itakama, with their allies from the northern desert, SA-GAZ, Suti, and Akhlamu, attacking the outlying strongholds of the Egyptian Empire in North Syria and Phœnicia, and gradually working southwards as they meet with success after success. Within the empire we have the same jumble of loyalty and disloyalty, some of the native princes and governors honestly devoted to the Egyptian connection and anxious to maintain it, while others are strongly, though mainly secretly, anti-Egyptian, and do all they can to advance the cause of the assailants, without irrevocably committing

The Amarna Age

themselves in the unlikely event of Egypt proving the victor in the end. The modern Persia may perhaps stand for the once formidable buffer-state of Mitanni, now merely a pawn in the crafty game which the Hittite king is playing. In order to make the parallel complete, however, we should have to add a movement of invasion by hostile forces, beginning somewhere on the eastern side of Central India and working gradually southwards to the conquest of the southern part of the peninsula. This would then correspond to the southern portion of the movement against the Egyptian dominance, that of the Habiru, whose sphere of operations starts roughly from Megiddo and the Plain of Jezreel, and extends southwards along the main trade-routes, with Jerusalem as its main objective. It should be noted that in the opinion of some scholars, the Habiru of the Jerusalem letters, whom they identify with the invading Hebrews, enter from the south of Palestine, by Kadesh-Barnea, and from the east of Jordan, north of the Dead Sea ; but this variation does not greatly affect the general conception of the situation.

The whole position must have been a very clouded and obscure one for the Pharaoh and his counsellors, viewing it from the distance and with the prepossessions of Egypt. Egypt was much further from the centre of disturbance, in an effective sense, than we are from India, and while the racial complexities and obscurities involved, with all their consequent difficulties in the way of a real understanding of the situation, were perhaps no greater for the Egyptian diplomats than they are for our own, the difficulty of obtaining anything like accurate information as to what was actually happening must have been enormously increased by the comparative slowness of

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

communication, which often resulted in a dispatch being received at the Egyptian court only after the situation which it described had been entirely changed by subsequent events. The confusion of mind and hesitation of policy to which this gave rise can be traced very clearly in the Amarna letters, and ought to mitigate very considerably the severity of the judgment which we feel inclined to pass upon what seems to us the absolute ineptitude of the handling of affairs on the part of the Egyptian authority. The leaders of the movement against Egypt, from Shubbiluliuma downwards, were manifestly among the most accomplished liars who have ever adorned the earth, while one has more than a suspicion that even the genuinely loyal men were often at least economical of the truth, and told "their God, their Sun" in Egypt, with many protestations of devotion, not always the real truth, but the truth as they deemed it most advisable that he should hear it. One scarcely wonders that poor Akhenaten, "living in truth" himself, was utterly at sea among these accomplished liars, and did not know whom to believe. The pity is that he did not refuse to believe any of them, and did not go in person to see with his own eyes the state of affairs.

The one reasonably fixed point in the whole quaking bog of lies and intrigues was that one might distrust the Hittites. Apparently this fact had dawned upon the minds of the Egyptian diplomats at an early stage of their dealings with Shubbiluliuma. We have seen that in Shubbiluliuma's letter of congratulation on Akhenaten's accession the old Hittite intriguer grumbles about the withholding of the embassies which had been customary between Egypt and Hatti in the reign of Amenhotep III.

The Amarna Age

(K. 41), "The messages which thy father during his lifetime was accustomed to send, why hast thou, my brother, thus withheld?" Perhaps they had been withheld because Egyptian diplomacy had been learning by sore experience that it took a long spoon to sup with Shubbiluliuma, as with another greater potentate, though one wonders, in the light of what actually happened, whether Egypt would not have been better, after all, to agree with her adversary while she was in the way with him, rather than to have fought him for a century, only to come to an agreement at last when it was too late. Anyhow, Hatti could be definitely labelled as hostile; but beyond that it must have been as difficult to establish the true orientation of the score of Asiatic princelets and chieftains who wrote plausible letters to the bewildered Akhenaten as to define the shape of a cloud. The only difference between them was that some of them told more lies than others; nobody told nothing but the truth—not even poor Ribaddi, for whom one has a sincere respect as a good man struggling against the most maddening difficulties that ever a son of Adam had to deal with.

The situation which Akhenaten was called upon (often and vainly) to deal with was by no means a new one. Underneath all the splendour and apparent prosperity of the reign of Amenhotep III. there lay a mass of Syrian discontent and all the elements of a formidable uprising against Egyptian dominance. Even in the days of Thothmes III. the Syrians had never proved readily submissive to their conquerors; and it was only when that tireless soldier had beaten down the rebellious spirit by the hammer-strokes of many successive campaigns that a measure of quietness was attained in the conquered

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

provinces. The promptness of Amenhotep II. and Thothmes IV. in marching to quell the outbreaks which marked the early days of their respective reigns quenched for the time the tendency to revolt, and another reign or two of the same quality as those of the conqueror and his successors would probably have converted Syria into a reasonably peaceful dependency of Egypt. But Amenhotep III. was much too lordly and leisurely a gentleman to worry himself with the wearisome details of his northern province, or to undertake the troublesome sea-voyages or the even more wearisome marches which would have been necessary if he wished to show the Egyptian banners in the field, and teach his vassals that Egypt was still a power to be reckoned with. His solitary visit to Sidon was probably made more in the interests of sport than in those of national policy. Even so, it did good, but it was never repeated; and a generation grew up in the north which had never seen an Egyptian Pharaoh at the head of his troops, and whose only links with Egypt were the undoubted and distasteful fact that they had to pay their annual tribute to a king who was otherwise merely a name to them, the Egyptianised manners of a few of their local princelets, which were doubtless an abomination in the eyes of the bitter Semites, and the swagger of the handfuls of Egyptian troops who formed the garrisons of important points, or furnished escorts to the tax-collectors and deputies of the Pharaoh, and who would behave no better, if no worse, than the troops of the dominant power generally behave in a conquered country. An invisible king is, to an Oriental, always profoundly impressible by the pomp and majesty of kingship, a non-existent king; and the next step in the reasoning is that

The Amarna Age

the absent power may safely be intrigued against and disregarded. The later history of the innumerable alliances against the irresistible Assyrian, made only to be dashed in pieces, but remade as soon as a few months' absence on the part of the conqueror had brought back again the feeling of security, shows us something of the condition of mind with which Egypt had to deal in her northern provinces. The process is depicted by one of the men who were to be the heaviest sufferers from its results in two sentences from letters of poor Ribaddi of Byblos to Akhenaten. "Truly," he says to his incomprehensible overlord at Akhetaten, "thy father did not march out, nor did he inspect the provinces and his feudatories," and the natural result followed with fatal certainty. "Since the time when your father returned from Sidon, since that time the lands have attached themselves to the SA-GAZ." Out of sight was out of mind ; and while Pharaoh, though doubtless great, was very far away, Shubbiluliuma was steadily coming nearer, and his tools and instruments were actually in touch with the perplexed vassals of Egypt. Not unnaturally the vassal princes, with the exception of a few faithful Abdiels who were either too loyal or too deeply committed to the interests of Egypt to draw back, went with the stream, and joined the steadily growing band who held the opinion that the day of Egypt was done, and that the true Sun to worship was not the Aten of the far-off Pharaoh, but the Sun who reigned in Boghaz-Keui. Already, before the death of Amenhotep III., the process of nibbling at the outlying Egyptian dependencies in the north was going steadily on. The chief agents in the work of undermining the Egyptian empire at its northern extremity were the Amorite chief-

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

tains Abdashirta and his sons, of whom Aziru is the most prominent, and Itakama, who appears to have been the son of Shutatarra of Kinza. These chiefs, backed by the Hittite king, were working continually against the Egyptian power in Phoenicia and Amor, while outwardly professing loyalty to their suzerain in Egypt.

Opposed to them were a few of the local princes, among whom Ribaddi, the ruler of Gubla or Byblos, was the outstanding man, and almost the only one who proved to be consistently loyal, though his colleague Abi-milki of Tyre held to his allegiance as long as it was possible to do so. The letters of Ribaddi to the Pharaoh number more than fifty, and form a most interesting and somewhat touching series. His town of Byblos was one of the most important cities of the Phœnician coast-line, commanding the coast as far north as the town of Simyra, north of Tripolis, and exercising some sort of superiority over the *hinterland*. Ribaddi himself stands out as thoroughly committed to the cause of Egypt. "Byblos," he tells the Pharaoh, is "the faithful handmaid of the king from the days of his fathers; but behold, at this time the king has allowed his faithful city to go out of his hand." "Let the king search the records of the house of his fathers, and see if the man who is in Byblos is not a true servant."

The governor's assertion of the long-continued faithfulness of Byblos to its Egyptian connections has been remarkably confirmed by the notable results of Montet's excavations in 1921 and subsequent years. Chief of these, for our purpose, was the discovery of the scanty remains of an unmistakable Egyptian temple, going back to the days of the Old Kingdom. Fragments of sitting and standing colossi showed that the façade of the temple

The Amarna Age

had been adorned, in accordance with regular Egyptian practice, with monumental sculpture in the round ; while an inscription of the Pharaoh Unas (Vth Dynasty, *circa* 2855-2825 B.C.) tells us that it was also provided with the sacred lake which was a regular feature of the normal Egyptian temple. The building was sacred to two deities, "The Lord" and "The Lady" of Byblos, who by the customary process of assimilation were identified with Ra and Hathor. This most interesting building was violently destroyed, at some time before the rise of the XIIth Egyptian Dynasty, and was succeeded by a neighbouring temple, whose rich foundation deposits, however, afford ample evidence of the continuance of Egyptian influence in the city.

Thus the connection of Byblos with Egypt must go back almost to the dawn of history in both lands, and not only was Ribaddi justified in his statement of the long-enduring faithfulness of his city, but Zakar-Baal was probably on equally sure ground, when, in his reply to Wenamon, he stated that his city owed its earliest inspirations of civilisation to the culture of the Nile Valley. "For artisanship came forth from it, to reach my place of abode ; and teaching came forth from it, to reach my place of abode,"

In the royal necropolis of the city M. Montet discovered five tombs, of which four were of Middle Kingdom date, while the fifth belonged to the period of Ramses II. Of the treasure found in one of the early tombs it has been said that it "bears comparison even with Egyptian burials as rich as those of Dahshur." It is from the sarcophagus of the latest tomb that there has come that inscription in ancient Phœnician script which has excited such widespread interest.

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

Faithful as Ribaddi was, however, he found his power steadily shrinking before the attacks of the Amorite princes, of whom, and of whose policy, he expresses himself in bitter terms. "Abdashirta is a cur," he says again and again, "and he is seeking to capture all the cities of the king" (K. 76). The chief aim of his opponents was apparently to isolate Byblos, and this they accomplished by the gradual seizure of the land in the interior from which the seaport drew its supplies, while the sea-borne trade of the city was injured by the fact that Abdashirta and his sons had captured the northern ports, and were trading to Egypt on their own account with the materials which they derived from the *hinterland* over which Byblos formerly held control. The consequence was that without any open attack the once flourishing city was gradually being reduced to a state of poverty and starvation. "Their sons and their daughters and the timber of their houses have been given to Yarimuta for the saving of our lives." Thus, probably even before the change of sovereign in Egypt, the tide was running strongly against Egyptian influence in Phœnicia, and even the men who would fain still have been loyal to Egypt were being put under a pressure which was sure, sooner or later, to accomplish its purpose, and force them, for the saving of their lives, into alliance with the powers which could and would do what Egypt had apparently lost the power or the will to do.

At this stage the situation was obviously such that a comparatively small effort on the part of the Egyptian government would have been the salvation of the empire, and of the loyal servants who were upholding the cause of their suzerain under such difficulties. The aid which

The Amarna Age

Ribaddi asks vainly from his overlord is to our minds ludicrously small. "May it seem good to my lord, the Sun of the lands, to give me twenty pair of horses" (K. 103). Even at his utmost need he asks for only a handful of troops. "Intreat the king to give you 300 men; so will we be able to hold the city" (K. 93). Things were at the point where men's minds were quite undecided. The general tendency was away from Egypt, but it had not hardened into open hostility to their old suzerain, and a display of Egyptian troops, even on a small scale, would probably have convinced the malcontents that Egypt was determined to maintain her position in the land, and the trouble would have died down for the time. Unfortunately the Egyptian government could not realise the urgency of the position, or the ease with which it might be met; and ere long, what a few hundreds of Egyptian archers or a score or two of chariots could have settled if sent at the right time, had grown into something which a great army would scarcely have been sufficient to deal with.

We can hardly wonder, however, at the supineness of the king and his advisers. Ribaddi's letters seem to us so clear and so urgent that it seems amazing that they should have been disregarded; but we have to remember that the Egyptian Foreign Office was receiving dispatches from the very man, Abdashirta, whom Ribaddi was accusing, which breathe nothing but the purest loyalty, and sometimes hint that the loyalty of Ribaddi himself is far from being above suspicion. Here is a typical specimen of the correspondence of the man who was stealthily stealing away city after city from his Egyptian master, and so far as words go, he is quite as loyal as poor Ribaddi, if he is not even



AMORITE TYPES (*Chapter X*)
By kind permission of Sir Flinders Petrie

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

more fervent in his devotion. "To the King, the Sun, my Lord, speaks Abdashirta, thy servant, the dust of thy feet. Beneath the feet of the King, my Lord, seven times and seven times I fall. Lo, I am a servant of the King, and his house-dog, and the whole of the Land of Amor guard I for the King, my Lord." Ribaddi had also said that Abdashirta was a dog; indeed, he said it many times, and with much emphasis; but Abdashirta's way of it was not only more flattering to himself, but likely to be more acceptable to those to whom he was writing (K. 60). Even when he was actually perpetrating what in the light of fuller knowledge we can recognise as an act of open warfare against the loyal Ribaddi, he contrives to make his action seem praiseworthy, while Ribaddi's face is blackened as a disturber of the king's peace. He writes to the Egyptian prefect, Pakhanate, who has apparently heard some charge against him, explaining that the real facts are that he heard that Shekhlal mercenaries (probably Ribaddi's troops) had seized Simyra, and were slaying the dwellers in the palace; whereupon he hastened to the city and succeeded in rescuing four of the nobles from death. "Lo, now, these four men were dwelling in the palace, and they said to me: 'Save us out of the hand of the Shekhlal warriors!' and I delivered them out of the hand of the Shekhlal warriors" (K. 62).

Bombarded thus from both sides with dispatches which flatly contradicted one another, what was a poor bewildered Pharaoh to do? The time for the one thing which would really have been of service—namely, to go and see for himself—was apparently past for Amenhotep III., who was sinking into the ill-health and lethargy which

The Amarna Age

marked his closing years. At all events, he did nothing, or next to nothing ; and the process of gradual disintegration of the empire went on steadily during the latter years of his reign, unchecked by any interference from Egypt on any scale worth counting. It is scarcely fair, therefore, to lay upon the shoulders of Akhenaten, as is so often done, the whole blame for the loss of the Egyptian empire in Asia. Undoubtedly he must bear his own share of the responsibility for the neglect of his outlying provinces, for whose defence he steadily refused, almost, as one would think, as a matter of principle, to do anything ; but the process which destroyed the empire was no new thing ; it had been going on for years before Akhenaten had anything to do with the matter, and nothing would have stopped it but a vigorously aggressive policy. He did not make the situation ; he simply inherited it ; and if we blame him, as we must, for the disastrous results of his policy, we must recognise that we are blaming him for not meeting a situation with whose creation he had little or nothing to do, by a policy which would have been the negation of all the religious principles which were dearest to his soul. Akhenaten, so far as one can judge, did not let his provinces slip through his fingers merely out of incapacity or carelessness. For him it was a choice between empire and conviction ; and he chose for conviction. We may think his choice a disastrous mistake ; but it must not be forgotten that there is a good deal to be said on his side of the matter.

With the accession of Akhenaten there came, as we have seen, a brief pause in the march of events. Kings, princes, and vassals, from the old intriguer of Boghaz-

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

Keui downwards, were waiting to see what manner of man the new Pharaoh might be. There was always the possibility that it might not be so safe to presume upon his supineness as it had been with his easy-going father; and meanwhile it was as well not to commit oneself too deeply. We have seen Shubbiluliuma's somewhat surly letter of congratulation to the new Pharaoh, with its hint at a possible grievance. Erelong, however, the kings, let alone the vassals, are all finding fault, and curiously the trouble all points in the one direction. Akhenaten is not living up to the tradition of lordly open-handedness which had characterised his father in his dealings with these greedy despots. Had the charge of niggardliness only come from one source, we might have written it off as a piece of jealousy or spite; but when all his royal correspondents are at one in accusing Akhenaten of parsimony, we realise that there is more in the thing than that. The complaint begins with Burraburiash of Babylon, "Now has my brother sent me two minas of gold as a present; but now you have gold in great abundance, so send me as much as your father used to send; and if the supply is short, send me half as much as your father used to send" (K. 9). "Why hast thou only sent two minas of gold?" he repeats sorrowfully, shaking his head at so great a declension from the gorgeous standards of liberality of Amenhotep III. He returns to the charge in his next letter. "Three times have thy messengers come, and thou hast not sent me any beautiful present at all; therefore neither have I sent thee any beautiful present" (K. 10). Even when a present duly came, it was not satisfactory. "As for your messenger whom you sent, the twenty minas of gold which he brought were not

The Amarna Age

of good standard; when it was put into the furnace, only five minas resulted" (K. 10). Again he is greatly shocked at the shabby escort of five chariots which Akhenaten sent to Babylon to bring down one of the Babylonian princesses to Egypt. What will all the neighbours think? "A daughter of the Great King has been carried down to Egypt with only five chariots!" Even poor Nefertiti has got into the Babylonian's bad graces for her sins of omission. "To the lady of your house have I only sent twenty gem-rings in fine lapis lazuli; for she has done nothing for me that I should requite her. She did not lift up my head when I was in distress" (K. 11).

We have already heard the complaint of Ashur-uballit of Assyria that he was surely as good as "that Hanigalbatian king," and deserved as good a present. Even Tushratta, whose connection with Egypt was obviously the light of his eyes, plucks up spirit at last to protest against Akhenaten's economical ways. Amenhotep III. had promised him some golden statues, one apparently for himself, and one for his daughter Tadukhipa. The business had been advanced so far before the old king's death, that the Mitannian messengers in Egypt had seen the statues cast, and could testify that they were of gold and of full weight. "And he showed a great deal of other gold, without measure, which he purposed to send to me, and he said to my messengers, 'Behold the statues, and behold the abundance of gold, and the vessels without reckoning which I am about to send to my brother; look upon it with your own eyes.' But now, my brother, the statues which thy father purposed to send, thou hast not sent; but thou hast sent ones which are of wood,

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

overlaid. Also the vessels which thy father purposed to send me hast thou not sent." The wooden statues were evidently a bitter pill for Tushratta to swallow, for he returns to his complaint in his letter to the king's mother Tiya. "Now has Napkhuria, thy son, caused the statues to be made of wood overlaid with gold, although in the land of thy son gold is as dust" (K. 26). What may have been the reason for this parsimony on the part of the young Pharaoh is another matter. Perhaps he had got a little tired of the clamour of the sturdy royal beggars who had preyed upon his father's open-handedness; perhaps he found that with temples to build and equip in all the provinces of his empire, and with a new capital to found, even all the gold of the land where it was as common as dust was not too much to meet his needs. At all events, the early days of Akhenaten's reign witnessed a rapid decline of the popularity which had characterised Pharaoh in the days when he was banker for all the needy kings of the ancient east. A Pharaoh who so far forgot what was due to himself and his brother royalties as to send wooden images instead of golden ones!

Doubtless this small matter had also its share in complicating the situation abroad; but Akhenaten had speedily weightier reasons for anxiety than the complaints of his pack of greedy royalties. Ere long the news from the north began to grow more and more ominous, and Ribaddi's letters are one long wail of dismay over the way in which things were being allowed to go to ruin. Shortly before the accession of Akhenaten, there had apparently been a brief break in the clouds. Ribaddi's insistence had wakened up the Egyptian authorities so far that a small force had been sent under "Amanappa."

The Amarna Age

which is probably Ribaddi's version of the Egyptian name Amenemapet, and had recovered the key-position of Simyra, which had fallen into the hands of Abdashirta. Amanappa is throughout the main hope of the sorely tried prince of Byblos, and indeed he and Yankhamu, the viceroy of the Delta, seem to have been almost the only servants of the king who really understood the position, and were true. Ribaddi writes of Yankhamu : " There is no servant of the king who is a truer servant than Yankhamu " (K. 118). The success of Amanappa's little expedition stayed the flood of defection for awhile, and showed, if only the Egyptian court had had eyes to see, how surely firm measures would succeed ; but the advantage was not followed up as it should have been. Abdashirta, seeing that the Egyptian bolt was shot, took heart again, and attacked Byblos itself. " Gubla alone is left to me, and he seeks to seize it," writes Ribaddi (K. 91).

Meanwhile Tushratta of Mitanni, perhaps encouraged by Amanappa's advance, and perhaps trying to combine a bid for Egyptian favour with a move for his own safety against the Hittites, marched into Phœnicia and occupied Simyra. He attempted to relieve Byblos, but was prevented by lack of water, and was obliged to return home. Ribaddi reports this move on the part of the King of Mitanni in a fashion which shows that he was by no means sure whether to count Tushratta a friend or an enemy. " Moreover, the King of Mitanni marched forth unto Simyra, and sought to go even unto Gubla ; but there was no water for him to drink, and so he returned to his own land " (K. 85). There can be little doubt that Tushratta was genuinely seeking to serve Egypt's

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

interests as well as his own, for Egypt was his only hope against the Hittites ; but when even Ribaddi, on the spot, was doubtful about the Mitannian's intentions, we can imagine how they would be misrepresented at the Egyptian court, and how Tushratta's well-meant expedition would damn any proposal to use Egyptian troops in aid of Mitanni against the Hittite advance. So this new opportunity also was let slip, as that of Amanappa's success had been.

Fate soon gave Egypt a third and last chance of retrieving the situation. A letter from an unknown man of Byblos to an Egyptian official informs us that Egypt's great enemy has been taken out of the way. Who was responsible for the slaying of Abdashirta, the long-suffering Ribaddi or another, we cannot tell ; but anyhow the Amorite chieftain perished in some obscure skirmish, and his death must have staggered the opposition to Egypt for the moment. But the lethargy or preoccupation of the Egyptian authorities let slip this golden opportunity, as the others had been allowed to slip. The place of the dead rebel was taken by his son Aziru, and poor Ribaddi speedily realised that Aziru's little finger was thicker than his father's loins. Indeed, if one's sympathies were not already enlisted on the side of the much-enduring governor of Byblos, one could spare a meed of admiration for the amazing game of mingled cunning and boldness which Aziru plays against the whole might of the greatest empire of his world and its vassals. Knowing, as we do, that he was not playing it for his own hand, as he imagined, but for the benefit of the arch-schemer Shubbiluliuma, who used his cleverness and courage to the full, and then broke his tool as soon as

The Amarna Age

the work was done, we need not fear to sympathise a little with the cunning rascal, whose vice is to be duly punished in the end ; and certainly he is a most diverting liar, who never loses his fertility of invention even in face of dangers which would have paralysed mere ordinary liars into truthfulness.

Erelong Aziru was knocking at the gates of Simyra again. This time he is in alliance with the men of Arvad, who furnished a fleet, so that Simyra was beleaguered both by land and sea. Arvad had always, even in the days of Thothmes III., been bitterly hostile to Egypt, and now she was getting a little of her own back for the humiliations which the great Pharaoh had put upon her. "Behold Simyra," writes Ribaddi. "As a bird in the fowler's snare, so is Simyra. Night and day the sons of Abdashirta are against it by land, and the men of Arvad by sea" (K. 105). It was vain to expect that Egypt would send troops to relieve the city, and one may question if even Ribaddi's suggestion that the ships of Arvad in Egyptian ports should be seized was acted upon, for plainly at this stage dust was being industriously thrown in the eyes of those in authority in Egypt by the Amorite party and their sympathisers, till Akhenaten and his advisers did not know which were their friends and which their enemies.

This is made plain by the interesting and pathetic letter which comes from the indignant elders of the town of Irkata. This little seaport, to the south of Arvad, was holding loyally to its allegiance to Egypt, and was suffering accordingly from the sons of Abdashirta. The town was visited by an Egyptian officer, Turbikha, lieutenant of the powerful viceroy, Yankhamu ; but instead of his

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

visit being an encouragement to the faithful little town it proved an insult, for so far had Turbikha misread the situation that he roundly told the citizens that Pharaoh hated Irkata. Irkata's indignant letter of protest is worth quoting in part as an example both of the wonderful loyalty of some of the Egyptian vassals under great provocation and of the difficulty which the interpretation of the situation must have presented to the advisers of the Pharaoh away in Egypt. "This letter is a letter of the town of Irkata. To the King, our Lord, thus speaks Irkata and its citizens: At the feet of the King, our Lord, seven times and seven times we fall! To our Lord, the Sun, thus speaks Irkata: Let the heart of the King, our Lord, know that we guard Irkata for him. When the King, our Lord, sent Turbikha unto us, he spake on this wise to us, 'The King hates Irkata'! . . . May the King, our Lord, hearken to the words of his true servants, and may he give a reward to his servants, so that our enemies may behold it, and eat dirt. Let not the breath of the King depart from us! The town-gates have we barred until the breath of the King shall come to us. Mighty is the enmity against us! Mighty indeed!" The yoke of Egypt cannot have pressed very heavily upon Irkata when the town still maintained its faithfulness under such conditions. On the other hand, if an Egyptian official, on the spot, and presumably trained to his work, could make such a blunder, need we wonder that the Pharaoh and his advisers were often hopelessly at sea as to who was loyal and who disloyal, as the stream of letters came in from Syria, traitor and true man alike breathing nothing but the purest loyalty?

Ribaddi might write letters which to his mind put the

The Amarna Age

situation so clearly that the blindest might see it as he did ; but the next post from Syria would bring a letter from Aziru, which made Ribaddi's white look black and his black white ; and so the thing went on until Akhenaten may almost be excused if he decided that there was nothing to choose between the competing liars, and that they should be left to stew in their own juice. Moreover, there was a sinister element of treachery in the Egyptian court itself. One of the great nobles of Akhenaten's *entourage* was that "Dudu," who is known to us as Tutu from his rock-tomb at Tell el-Amarna. His name suggests Semitic relationships ; and his influence at court was evidently cast on the side of the traitor Aziru, and against the faithful Ribaddi. Dudu, of course, may merely have been misled, and may have been quite disinterested in the advice which he gave at Akhenaten's Council-board ; but the following letter from Aziru scarcely bears out such a supposition. "To Dudu, my Lord, my Father, thus speaks Aziru, thy Son, thy Servant. Beneath my Father's feet I fall. May my Father be well. Behold ! O Dudu, I have given all the desire of the King, my Lord ; and whatever is the desire of the King, my Lord, let him write accordingly, and I will give it. Moreover, thou art in that place (Egypt), my Father, and, whatever is the wish of Dudu, my Father, write it, and I will surely give it. Behold, thou art my Father and my Lord, and I am thy Son. The lands of Amor are thy lands, and my house is thy house ; and whatever thou desirest, write, and lo ! I will assuredly grant thy wish. Lo now ! thou sittest before the King, my Lord, and my enemies have spoken slanders of me to my Father before the King, my Lord. Do not thou allow it to be so. And,

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

behold, when thou sittest as a councillor before the King, my Lord, do not thou allow calumnies to be spoken against me! Truly I am a servant of the King, my Lord, and from the words of the King, my Lord, and from the words of Dudu, my Father, will I not depart for evermore! But if the King, my Lord, does not love me, but hates me, what shall I say then?" (K. 158).

Knowing what we know of the real work which Aziru was doing, we can estimate at its true value the lip-service which Aziru offers to "the King, my Lord," and can understand also how it was that poor Ribaddi, in his honesty, could get no support at the Egyptian court, while the traitor Aziru had always his apologist. More or less it was a question of bakshish, as it always has been in the East, and Aziru could count on a friend at court to explain away his worst treacheries, and to make his blackest crimes seem virtues, so long as the vivifying stream of palm-oil flowed in sufficient volume from Syria into the stores of Dudu. For once in a way we may be sure that "My house is thy house," and "Whatsoever thou desirest, write, and I will give it," were not mere courtesy phrases. When we blame Akhenaten for his blindness and inaction, we need not forget the difficulties of his position, where his worst foes were those of his own household. It may have been the same treacherous influence within the Egyptian court-circle which hindered the employment of the viceroy of the Delta, Yankhamu, on the task for which Ribaddi evidently judged him the one fit man.

Gradually the plight of the unfortunate governor of Byblos grew more and more hopeless. It must have been intensely exasperating to the poor man, doing his utmost

The Amarna Age

in desperate straits, to receive the advice of lofty and supercilious stupidity which now and again came to him from Egypt—the only thing which did come. Ribaddi had to learn, like other good men since, that to the official mind the earnestness and urgency of the man on the spot, who sees the actual need, are merely a nuisance ; while the man himself is a bore who must be taught his proper place. At a very early stage in the business, the Egyptian bureaucracy evidently made up its mind that Ribaddi was to be firmly discouraged in his desire to tell the truth, pleasant or unpleasant. “ If I write bad news to my Lord,” he says (K. 117), “ then someone says, ‘ Why do you write bad news ? ’ ” One can picture the rage of the despairing man, torn with anxiety, at the thought of these arm-chair statesmen sitting comfortably in their luxurious houses at Akhetaten, and lecturing him on how he ought to conduct his affairs, and write nothing but good news to the king, when the enemy was thundering at his gates ! Sometimes his passion gets the better even of his awe of the Pharaoh. “ Why has the King, my Lord, written to me, saying, ‘ Defend yourself, and you will surely be defended ’ ? Against whom shall I defend myself ? Against my enemies, or against my own subjects ? Who will defend me ? If the King would defend his servants, then should I be delivered ; but if the King does not defend me, then who will defend me ? If the King sends men from Egypt and Melukhkha, and horses, by the hand of this servant of thine right speedily, then shall I be delivered so that I may serve my Lord, the King. At present I have nothing at all wherewith to obtain horses. Everything has been given to Yarimuta to keep life in me ” (K. 112). It would have been well

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

for Akhenaten if the uncompromising truth of his uncourtly vassal had reached him oftener than one fears that it did; but the chances are that the Pharaoh seldom or never saw Ribaddi's letters, especially when they had bad news in them, as they generally had, and that all the passion of the governor's heart was stolidly pigeon-holed by Akhenaten's cuneiform scribe—"another screed from that impossible man of Byblos"—and that the king heard no more of it than was deemed advisable by Dudu and Co.

Naturally things went from bad to worse in Syria. Soon Simyra had fallen again into the hands of the Amorite rebels, and had been destroyed. The fall of this important city apparently roused Egypt for a moment to some show of activity, and an Egyptian officer, Pakhura, was sent north with a force of Sutu (Arab mercenaries). But whatever hopes Ribaddi may have cherished over this unwonted activity were destined to be bitterly disappointed. "Egypt helped in vain and to no purpose," as so often in her history. Pakhura so totally misunderstood the situation that his Arabs attacked and slew the Sherden troops upon whom Ribaddi relied for the defence of the city. This was almost the last straw for the sorely-burdened man. "Since that time," he writes bitterly to the king, "the city has been exasperated against me; and truly the city says, 'A crime such as has not been committed from eternity has been committed against us'" (K. 122). The disaffection in Byblos was fostered by Ribaddi's own brother, and the governor's position even in his own city rapidly grew desperate. In one of his letters he recalls how his wife and his household had said to him, "Join yourself to the son of

The Amarna Age

Abdashirta, so that we may have peace"; "but I did not consent," he says, "and did not listen to them." Now perhaps he was wishing that he had done so.

For some reason, he had to leave Byblos, on a mission to Beirut; and once his back was turned the gates of his own city were closed against him. In vain he sent one of his sons to the Egyptian court to present his case personally; four months passed before an audience was granted to the young man! Leaving Beirut, the stubborn old loyalist somehow or other seemingly managed to get possession of Byblos again; and it is from his own city that we have what seems to be the swan-song of the doomed hero—not the least pathetic of a touching series. He is back in Byblos; but if his brother sees that his envoy returns from Egypt without any help, he fears that he will revolt again, and will drive him out of the city. "Let not my Lord, the King, neglect the affair of these dogs! Truly, I am not able to come into the land of Egypt. I grow old, and a sore sickness grips my body. Let my Lord, the King, know that the gods of Byblos are angered, and that my sickness, consequently, is sore upon me. And my sin have I confessed before the gods." Yet even so, the old man is steadfast, and clings still to his hope that the king will not utterly forsake him. "So long as I am in the city, I guard it for my Lord, and my heart is right towards my Lord, the King, so that I will not betray the city to the sons of Abdashirta. For to this end has my brother stirred up the city, that it may be delivered up to the sons of Abdashirta. O, let not my Lord, the King, neglect the city! For in it there is a very great quantity of silver and gold, and in the temples of its gods there is a great mass of property of all

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

sorts" (K. 137). One sombre sentence from another of his letters may fittingly close his record, "And the enemy do not depart from the gate of Byblos."

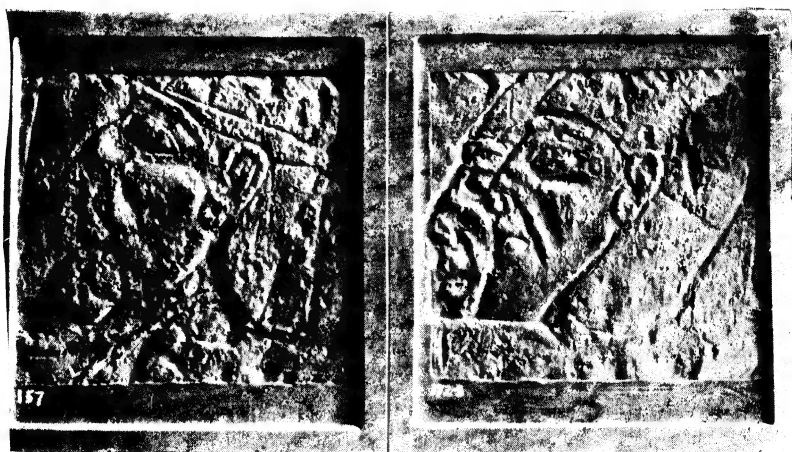
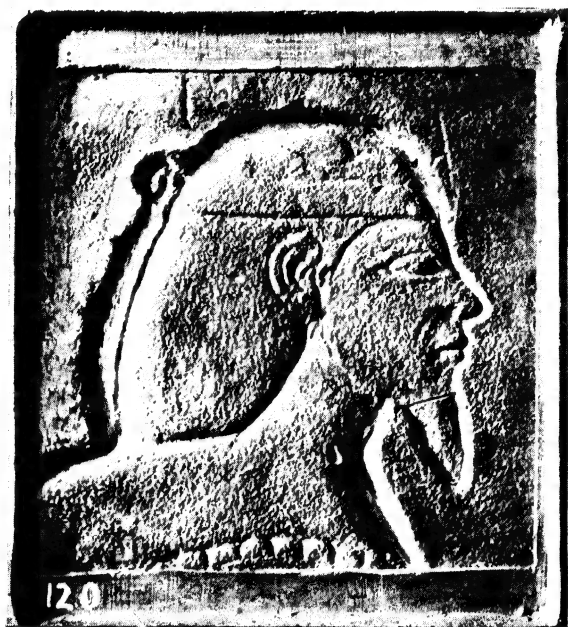
What was the end of the stout old soldier we do not know certainly, though we may make a good guess. We know from Akhenaten's letter to Aziru (K. 162) that he found refuge in Sidon—a fact which in itself shows the straits to which he had been reduced, for Zimrida of Sidon was the persistent enemy of Egypt. Zimrida apparently handed him over to his deadly enemy Aziru. The Amorite chieftain did not himself venture to slay so prominent a man, for he was still playing the game of posing as the faithful and much misunderstood servant of Egypt; but he did the next best thing, and handed over the unfortunate prince to some of his confederates. One may imagine what the tender mercies of the Amorites were in their day of triumph. So perished one whose faithfulness and loyalty were worthy of a better fate. More or less he may be taken as the typical representative of the loyalist to Egyptian dominion in Northern Syria; though perhaps there were few who were so resolute in face of the dangers and difficulties of devotion to their sluggish suzerain. The chief blot upon the memory of Akhenaten, and the thing which almost justifies the virulence of contempt and hatred with which some modern historians regard him, is his apathy in face of the sufferings of such loyal vassals as Ribaddi. Devotion to principle is a very noble thing; but the question is whether a man can ever have the right to be true to principle at the cost of other people? Only, in any judgment which we may pass upon Akhenaten in this respect, two things have to be remembered. First, the

The Amarna Age

king's inbred conception of himself as God incarnate, for whose sake his subjects were bound to hold their lives as of no account, and as the revealer of the yet greater God, the establishment of whose rule was of so supreme importance that the lives of men were nothing in comparison with it; and second, the fog of contradictions and misrepresentations in which, as is manifest from the Amarna letters, the Egyptian court lived and moved. It may be easy for us, with all the cards on the table, to see where Akhenaten's duty lay; but the king knew nothing of what is as plain as day to us, and the task of deciding whether to trust Ribaddi or Aziru must often have seemed to him an impossible one.

The fact is that, if we were not in possession of the commentary on the letters which is afforded by the course of the history, a commentary which Akhenaten naturally was not in a position to read, we should find it an almost insoluble problem to decide as to which of the two men was loyal, and which the traitor. Ribaddi perhaps, on the whole, rings truer, with the little touch of roughness which sometimes accompanies the presentation of truth; but our judgment is influenced in this respect by our knowledge of the course of events, and one questions if the difference would appear at all convincing to a reader set down with no source of knowledge save the two sets of letters, and bidden judge between them. That was Akhenaten's position, and I do not know that many men would have come out of it with any more credit than he did.

For Aziru was a most accomplished scoundrel, who could cover the tracks of his treachery with amazing skill, and was never for a moment at a loss for a good handy



SYRIAN TYPES (*Chapter X*)

By kind permission of Sir Flinders Petrie

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

lie to leave behind him in explanation of his passage. When the king commands his presence at court, doubtless to explain some of his questionable doings, he writes to his good friend Dudu that he would gladly come if it were possible, "But, my Lord, the King of Hatti has marched into Nukhashshi, and so I cannot come in the meantime. If only the King of Hatti would depart, then would I and Hatib come!" (K. 164). The King of Hatti would have chuckled at a piece of guile after his own heart, had he known the use which was being made of his name by his friend and fellow-plotter. The capture and destruction of Simyra, which exercised the mind of poor Ribaddi so much, was apparently rather a large demand upon the credulity of the Egyptian court, and Aziru was asked for explanations and commanded to rebuild the city at once. Such a command had no terrors for Aziru, who had all sorts of tame kings up his sleeve for just such emergencies. "My Lord," he writes to Akhenaten, "the kings of Nukhashshi have become hostile to me, and for that reason I have not been able to build-up Simyra; but within a year Simyra shall be built-up by me." A good deal of water would flow down the Nile within a year, and Aziru could leave the problem, no longer urgent, to the chapter of accidents. "My Lord," he adds in the same letter (K. 160), "I am thy servant to all Eternity, and may the King pay no heed to the enemies who slander me before my Lord!"

Not even the immaculate and transparent loyalty which found utterance in such touching expressions could escape suspicion, however, and in due course it came to pass that Khani, an Egyptian envoy, was sent north to interview this loyal vassal, and report upon the situation

The Amarna Age

Aziru had no intention of meeting any Egyptian envoy, or of submitting himself and his doings to any inconvenient questionnaire. Important business was found which forced him to hurry off to Tunip, leaving only his brother and another friend to look after the needs of the ambassador. To have his embassy made thus into a fool's errand was more than Akhenaten could swallow, and explanations were asked; but explanation was just where Aziru was at his best. "As to what the King, my Lord, has spoken concerning Khani, my Lord, I was dwelling in Tunip, and I did not know that he had arrived. So soon as I heard of it, I hastened after him, but did not overtake him. Now, when Khani gets safely home, let the King, my Lord, ask him how I looked after him. My brother and Batti-ilu waited upon him; cattle . . . and birds, provisions and liquor they provided for him. Horses and asses have I given for his journey. So may the King, my Lord, hearken unto my words!"

Ribaddi's letters have been a worry, as we know, to the poor bewildered Pharaoh, impatient of the bad news which threatened to break the consecrated peace of his Holy City, and it may well be that Aziru's blarney was more effectual than Ribaddi's unpleasant way of telling the truth; but when it came to Akhenaten's ears that the Prince of Byblos had been captured, and was probably in danger of his life, even Aziru's craft could not quite explain away that hard fact. Akhenaten writes to his treacherous vassal a long letter which has fortunately been preserved, and which is of priceless value to us as the sole direct evidence we possess of Akhenaten's frame of mind and his attitude towards the imperial problems which were interrupting his dream of universalism. On

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

the whole the letter is an adequate explanation of how it was that the king lost his empire. It is the letter of a kindly, well-meaning, gentle man, honestly angry against evil-doing and evil-doers, but incapable of the passion which would have vindicated the right at any cost. The times were out of joint, and Akhenaten, like Hamlet, felt the cursed spite that ever he was born to set them right, and was indeed, like the Prince of Denmark, the very last man who could do the ruthless work which was required. "Dost thou not write to the King, thy Lord," writes Pharaoh, "'I am thy servant, like all the former princes who were in Byblos'? Yet hast thou committed this crime"—and then comes the story of how Ribaddi had been handed over to the Amorite princes. "Didst thou not know the hatred of the men towards him?" "If thou art indeed a servant of the King, why hast not thou arranged for his sending to the King, thy Lord, of whom thou saidst, 'This Prince hath made request to me, saying, "Take me and bring me into my city."'" Of course the last thing in the world which Aziru intended was that Ribaddi should ever reach the Egyptian court, and no doubt, before this letter arrived, the accusing voice of the Prince of Byblos was silenced forever. "Stone-dead hath no fellow."

Further, the King complains, Aziru has been making friends with "the Man of Kadesh," the prince of the city which had always been Egypt's most virulent opponent, and has eaten a covenant-meal with him. Why does he do such things with a man with whom his king is at variance? "If thou doest service for the King, thy Lord, what then is there that the King will not do for thee? But if thou for any cause wishest to do evil, or if

The Amarna Age

thou even settest words of evil in thy heart, then wilt thou die, together with all thy family, by the axe of the King. Therefore do service for the King, thy Lord, and thou shalt be saved alive ; for know thou that the King desireth not that the whole land of Canaan should be in turmoil." Dr. Hall calls the letter "pompous" and "weakly-threatening," and perhaps it is so ; but it is also pathetic, the letter of a gentle soul who could not understand the fierce passions of hatred and envy against which he found himself obliged to contend, and who felt himself adrift upon a stormy sea, for which he had neither chart nor compass.

One item in the letter was the concession of the year's grace which Aziru had asked before his appearance at the Egyptian court. This act of grace, of course, simply gave the traitor leisure to complete his work in Syria, and to secure his footing, doubtless by the agency of his dear friend Dudu and the use of plentiful palm-oil, in the king's council-chamber. Evidently he used the time well, and when he was again summoned to Egypt, he could face the situation without fear. "He went," says Hall, "as a great vassal prince, slayer of the King's enemies, and defender of the empire against the Northern barbarians. The accusing voices of Akizzi of Katna, of Ribadda of Byblos, and of Abimilki of Tyre were now silent, and the Egyptian court was only too glad to compromise, and accept the accomplished fact with as little loss of dignity as possible. Aziru probably acknowledged Egyptian suzerainty and returned to Syria as the ruler of a practically independent state."

Fortunately, however, this story does not finish with this picture of triumphant iniquity. Aziru, no doubt,

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

imagined that he was working in his own interests alone, though he had never been adverse to use whatever advantages the interference of the Hittite king in the affairs of Syria might give him. Shubbiluliuma thought quite otherwise. The Hittite intriguer must have watched with grim interest and amusement the efforts of his understudy, and was doubtless quite willing to give him whatever encouragement he could ; but he had an opinion quite different from that of Aziru as to the pocket into which the plunder was going to go when the Amorite had forced Egypt to loosen her grasp. Aziru's nominal submission to Egypt gave him the excuse he needed for intervention, now that things were ripe. The Hittite army marched into North Syria, and Aziru was obliged to forestall invasion by immediate submission, and the payment of a heavy tribute. It may have been some comfort to the indignant shade of Ribaddi to see the discomfiture of his old enemy in the very hour of his seeming triumph, and to know that Aziru had only, after all his lies and wriggings, exchanged Egyptian whips for Hittite scorpions !

The fortunes of Ribaddi and Aziru may be said to sum up the story of the collapse of the Egyptian empire in Syria ; for the letters of the other actors in this field add comparatively little to the tale, and even those of Abimilki of Tyre, who comes next to Ribaddi in the importance of his contribution, only show us another and less clearly outlined phase of the same movement. Abimilki is Ribaddi-and-water, a weaker edition of the sturdy old chief of Byblos. His desire, he tells the king, is to come to see him, but he dares not, because of the enmity of Zimrida, the prince of Sidon, and he craves for a handful

The Amarna Age

of Egyptian troops, twenty in one letter, ten in another, manifestly just as an advertisement to Zimrida that Egypt had not forgotten him, and that he was under royal protection. Zimrida, who is in alliance with Aziru and the people of Arvad, has isolated him in his island stronghold, and he and his people have no water and no wood, nothing even wherewith to bury their dead. Meanwhile, of course, Zimrida is writing to Akhenaten that he is taking care of everything, as my Lord, the King, commands, and that "Sidon is prosperous, the handmaid of the King, which he gave into my hand." We see in the case of Tyre the same process being carried on which was proving effectual in the case of Byblos—the isolation of the coast cities by cutting them off from the *hinterland* which had yielded their supplies and their material for trading, so that in the end they were practically forced, for dear life's sake, to forsake Egypt and join the conspirators. Abimilki's record is brief, and one suspects, though there is no conclusive evidence on the point, that in the end he found the pressure of circumstances too strong for him, and went over to the Amorite side.

Thus we have been able to trace, from the first-hand evidence of the actors themselves, the process by which the northern portion of the great Asiatic empire which the conquering Pharaohs of the XVIIIth Dynasty left to their descendants was gradually filched away by Amorite chieftains, who were nominally acting as feudatories of Egypt, and whose aim was, no doubt, the establishment of an independent Amorite kingdom. Backed as these traitors were by the power of the Hittite Confederation, whose king had no objection to see them pulling the

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

chestnuts out of the fire for him, it is by no means certain that Egypt had now the power to have arrested the rebellion against her authority, even if she, or her king, had the will. The situation in 1375 B.C. was very different from what it had been in 1475. However that may be, Akhenaten's supineness and apathy settled the question once and for all. The Egyptian empire fell with scarcely an effort on the part of the central government to hinder the collapse, for the expeditions of Pakhura and his fellow-blunderers did more harm than good. How much of the royal apathy was due to a genuine conviction that it was wrong to employ armed force to hold the empire together, and how much to simple misunderstanding of the position and the careful fostering of that misunderstanding by the traitors within the palace gates, or to the languor of a visionary to whom the crude materialisms of empire seemed a very small matter in comparison with his own dreams of the universal love of God, who shall say? One way or another, the prize for which Thothmes III. and his successors had striven so manfully was allowed to slip, never to be grasped again; for though much of what was lost in the southern section of the Asiatic province was recovered and held by Seti I. and Ramses II., these stubborn and powerful Pharaohs never succeeded in regaining the ground which had been lost in Syria. The flood-mark of Thothmes III. was never reached again.

To complete the discomfiture of all things Egyptian or pro-Egyptian in Syria and Naharina came, exactly at what point in the story we have no positive means of determining, that absorption of Mitanni by Hatti of which we have already heard the tale. Whatever hopes Egypt may have cherished of an attempt to regain her lost

The Amarna Age

position by the help of suitable allies must have been dashed to the ground by the Mitannian collapse. Henceforward the weight of Mitanni lay in the Hittite, and not in the Egyptian scale of the balance, and there would be no more presents to Egypt of Hittite spoil taken "by the help of Teshub my God."

The story of the loss of the southern section of the empire, embracing Central and Southern Palestine, develops upon much the same lines. The leaders of the anti-Egyptian party are Labaya and his sons, who take the place of Abdashirta and his sons, with Tagi and his son-in-law Milki-ili. These chieftains, while stoutly protesting their loyalty to the Egyptian king, are busily engaged, like their more northerly compeers, in undermining Egyptian power and influence, and in securing for their own party whatever cities they can lay their hands upon without exciting too much attention. As Abdashirta and Aziru in the north found backers and allies in the Hittites and the SA-GAZ, so Labaya, Tagi, and Milki-ili rely largely upon the forces of the Habiru, wandering tribes in whom many scholars are disposed to see the Hebrews thus entering upon their conquest of the Land of Promise and using the anti-Egyptian designs of the Canaanite chieftains for the furtherance of their own claims. The identification, even apart from the appearance of similarity between the names, is a tempting one; but it must be said that nothing can possibly be more unlike the Biblical narrative of the Conquest of Canaan by Joshua and the tribes than the picture of the filching of the Egyptian province from its overlord by the combined forces and wiles of Canaanites and Habiru which is given us by the Amarna letters.

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

Not even the most violent exercise of the historic imagination can make a satisfactory composite out of the two pictures. If they do actually represent the same series of events, and if the Amarna letters tell a true tale, then the Biblical narrative of the Conquest is no more than a romance, which has not even a foundation in fact, for no two facts in the two stories agree with one another.

So far as it is possible to trace any order in the events which are described in the letters of the various parties concerned (not very far, as there is the same hopeless tangle of assertion and counter-assertion as in the case of the northern letters, and the same absence of any data as to the sequence of events), the anti-Egyptian movement seems to have begun in the neighbourhood of that ancient centre of warlike activity, the Plain of Jezreel. The protagonist on the Egyptian side at the beginning is Biridiya of Megiddo—a town whose present loyalty is in contrast with its position as the centre of the anti-Egyptian league in the time of Thothmes III. His short series of letters (K. 242-247 inclusive) pictures a course of events somewhat resembling those of the earlier days of the struggle in the north. Labaya and his sons, like Abdashirta and his family, are intriguing with the wandering tribes, and bribing them to assist the uprising against Egypt (K. 246). Erelong the danger grows more urgent, and Biridiya reports that the situation requires his constant diligence. "Verily, I guard Megiddo, the city of the King, my Lord, day and night. . . . Mighty is the enmity of the people of the SA-GAZ in the land! Therefore let the King, my Lord, have regard to his land" (K. 243). Other loyal princes in the neighbourhood were in even

The Amarna Age

worse case, and Yashdata of Taanach had been forced to seek refuge with his brother loyalist in Megiddo, whence he writes a doleful letter to Akhenaten.

The next stage in the business reveals the fact that Egyptian troops have apparently been sent in answer to Biridiya's plaint, with the result that Labaya has been captured. But with that fatal bungling which dogged all the efforts of the pro-Egyptian party both south and north, Labaya was allowed to slip through the fingers of his captors, and the opportunity was lost, just as that of the slaying of Abdashirta had been lost in the north. It is pretty plain that there were vassals of Egypt here also, who while protesting their loyalty to the Pharaoh were playing a double game, and were really on the side of the Amorites and Habiru. Of these was Zurata of Accho, to whom the custody of Labaya was committed, doubtless because he was favourably placed for sending the prisoner to Egypt by sea, whereas Biridiya would have had to send him, under an escort which he could probably ill spare, by one of the trade-routes, which were by no means secure. How Zurata discharged his task Biridiya tells us in an indignant letter to the king.

"Moreover I decided with my brothers, 'Since the Gods of the King have brought it to pass that we have possession of Labaya, we will bring him alive to the King, our Lord. . . .' But Zurata took Labaya out of Megiddo, and said to me, 'I will bring him by ship to the King.' But Zurata took him, and sent him to his own home from Khinatuna; and Zurata took the money for his ransom to himself" (K. 245). So Zurata, loudly, of course, protesting his own loyalty (K. 232), falls to be reckoned among the enemies of Egypt, and Accho takes

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

in the south the place occupied by Sidon and Arvad in the north. From Esdraelon the revolt gradually spreads further south on both sides of the Jordan, following in the main, as was natural, the trade-routes, to gain control of which was invariably the first aim of the rebels. At Gina, the Biblical En-Gannim and the modern Jenin, Labaya was slain, as we learn from a letter of Addu-karradu ; but his sons took his place as Aziru took that of the dead Abdashirta, and the pressure on the loyal princes continued as severe as ever. Indeed the death of Labaya was made by his sons an excuse for forcing other vassals of Egypt into disloyal acts. "Thus have the two sons of Labaya spoken to me," writes Addu-karradu (K. 250), "'Show hostility towards the people of Gina, because they have slain our father! And if thou dost not show hostility, we shall be thine enemies.' But I answered them, 'The God of the King, my Lord, forbid that I should show hostility towards the folk of Gina, the servants of the King, my Lord!'"

Soon we hear that the unrest has spread down the coast-route so far that Gezer is involved. Addu-dani (of Gath ?) writes to the king that Beia, the son of Gulate, has plundered the city, and has laid a heavy ransom upon his captives (K. 292) ; and here, as elsewhere, there is evidently misapprehension on the part of the Egyptian officers on the spot, for Addu-dani complains that when he had fortified Manakhate (Manahath, the Mahaneh of Judges xviii. 12 ?), with a view to the reception of the Egyptian troops, Maia, one of Akhenaten's officers, took the city out of his hands ; and he requests that Rianap, prefect of the district under Yankhamu, the viceroy of the Delta, should be instructed to restore it to him. The southward spread

The Amarna Age

of the revolt now brings upon the scene the man whose letters are almost as representative of the southern aspects of the movement as those of Ribaddi of the northern—Abdi-khiba of Jerusalem. His name, "Servant of the Goddess Khiba," suggests a Mitannian origin, and if instead of the Semitic "Abdi" the reading "Arta" were adopted, it would find a close parallel in the familiar Hebrew "Zedekiah."

Abdi-khiba holds his position in Jerusalem, as he is careful to inform us more than once, by special appointment of the Pharaoh: "Verily neither my father nor my mother set me in this place. The mighty hand of the King hath installed me in the house of my fathers." But though, as he suggests, such a fact should guarantee his loyalty, he has been slandered and misrepresented at the royal court. The slanders he traces to his own incautious speaking of the truth. Originally, as we have learned from a supplementary Amarna letter recently published, he had allied himself for the purpose of resisting the unrest, with Shuwardata of Keilah, Zurata of Accho, and Milki-ili—surely one of the strangest teams with which a genuine loyalist ever found himself unequally yoked together. The ill-assorted alliance sought the assistance of the powerful Yankhamu; but it may be that in this, as in other cases, court-influence was too jealous of the viceroy to permit of the appeal being successful, and this failure may have been at the root of the subsequent disaffection. Anyhow, we soon find that Abdi-khiba, according to his own account, is the only loyal member of the alliance left—the others have gone over to the enemy. The Egyptian officer on the spot, as had happened more than once in the north, had misread the

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

situation, and was favouring the disloyal men ; and when Abdi-khiba remonstrated, his plain-speaking was represented at court as disloyalty. " By the life of the King, my Lord, because I spoke thus to the officer of the King, my Lord, ' Why dost thou love the Habiru and hate the Regents ? ' therefore I am slandered before the King, my Lord. Because I say, ' The lands of the King, my Lord, are being lost, ' therefore am I slandered before the King, my Lord " (K. 286). The picture which the Prince of Jerusalem paints grows steadily darker. Gezer, Askalon, and Lachish have become hostile to Egypt ; two Egyptian loyalists, Turbasa and Yapti-adda, have been slain in the city-gate of Zilu, and yet the king makes no move. The royal caravans have been robbed in the fields of Aijalon, only fourteen miles from Jerusalem, and Abdi-khiba can no longer guarantee their safety (K. 287). Shortly we learn that even a city in the territory of Jerusalem, " a city of the King, Beth-Ninurta," has gone over to the enemy ; and even when troops were sent, the evil fate which dogged the loyalists all through hindered their employment where they would have been of effect. " But let the King, my Lord, know this ; when the King, my Lord, sent a garrison, Yankhamu took it all." In spite of this blunder, the viceroy remained the only hope of the distressed governor, and one of his last cries is, " The whole land of the king is going to ruin ; send Yankhamu, to care for the king's land."

The insistence of the straitened prince is pathetic. Through all his letters there sounds like a sombre refrain the words, " The whole land of the King, my Lord, is going to ruin." Often they occur without variation ; now and again a qualification is added, " If no

The Amarna Age

troops come this year, all the lands of the King, my Lord, will be lost." But the pathos of the appeals was probably lost in that same sense of irritation at the steady stream of bad news which had brought the royal anger down upon the head of poor Ribaddi. That Abdi-khiba had a shrewd suspicion that ill news was not likely to get ready audience at court is quite apparent from the little personal notes which he adds to his letters addressed to Akhenaten's cuneiform scribe, with whom he was evidently acquainted. "To the scribe of the King, my Lord, thus speaks thy servant, Abdi-khiba: 'Bring clearly before the King, my Lord, these words, All the lands of the King, my Lord, are going to ruin'" (K. 286). The governor of Jerusalem was so far luckier than his brother of Byblos, that his comparative nearness to Egypt made escape thither always a possibility, should the situation grow desperate. Abdi-khiba, apparently, was at last driven to contemplate the necessity of such a step. "If there are no troops this year," he writes (K. 288), "let the King send an officer to fetch me and my brothers, that we may die with my Lord, the King." One may hope that this at least was done; otherwise, so far as we know, nothing came of the worthy governor's insistence, or of his simple attempt to influence the royal scribe, who, good man, probably knew too well the worth of his place to risk it by urging unpleasant truths on his Majesty.

Moreover, as it had been in the north, so also was it in the south; each letter of a loyal servant of the Pharaoh was balanced by one, quite as plausible, and often more pleasant, from a traitor, who in his turn accused the true man of treachery to his liege-lord. What was poor Akhenaten to believe of Abdi-khiba's protestations, when

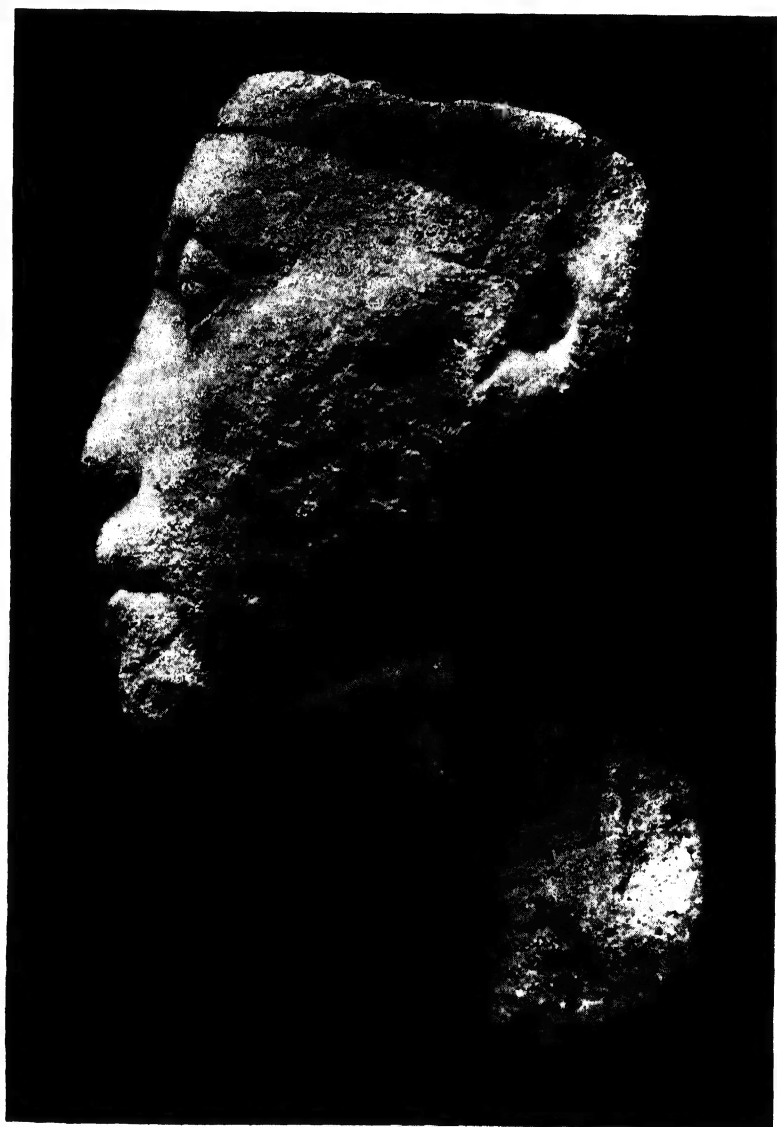
The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

the next post brought in a letter from the very Shuwardata whom the governor of Jerusalem had been denouncing, couched in such terms as these, "Labaya is dead, who used to take our cities ; but, behold, a second Labaya is Abdi-khiba, and he is taking our cities"? Shuwardata could appeal to Yankhamu as a witness on his behalf quite as confidently as his opponent. "Behold, Yankhamu, and the officer of the King, my Lord, let the King, my Lord, ask him, 'Is there great hostility against Shuwardata, or is there not?'" Milki-ili, the other great culprit of the district, is fully as plausible as Shuwardata, and when we find him accusing even the powerful Yankhamu of having robbed him of two thousand shekels of silver, and demanded his wife and children from him (K. 270), we feel that it must have seemed even more hopeless to Akhenaten to dream of straightening out the foul tangle of lies, than it seems to us. Our own impression may be that Abdi-khiba is the genuinely honest man, as Ribaddi at Byblos, and we may hope that he got his officer to fetch him down into Egypt, and there spent the peaceful evening of a stormy day in pleasant intercourse with his old friend the cuneiform scribe, whom he had now no longer any need to bore with his postscripts about the lands of the king going to ruin, since now they had very definitely gone ; but the man who can blame Akhenaten overmuch for not being able to discern Truth at the bottom of such a muddy well as the Amarna letters must have a singularly high opinion of human perspicuity, or perhaps only of his own !

Whatever may have been the truth as between Abdi-khiba and his enemies, there is no question as to the

The Amarna Age

results of the process which he described with such vigour. Whether in sheer perplexity, or from principle, Akhenaten would not act in the only fashion which could have saved his empire. Not even Abdi-khiba's appeals to his royal pride could move him. "The king has set his name upon the land of Jerusalem for ever, therefore he cannot forsake the lands of Jerusalem," so wrote the governor; "but the appeal was in vain," says Dr. Cook, "his enemies had gained the king's ear, and the men who controlled or captured the trade-routes won the day." The result was practically the complete extinction of the Egyptian empire in Asia—at least for the time. Possibly the collapse was not quite so complete in the southern part of the province as in the northern, for nearness to Egypt must have made it easier for help to be sent to the loyalists by men like Yankhamu, apart altogether from any direct royal effort; but even in the south the decline of Egyptian power and prestige was very great. In the tombs of Huya, superintendent of the Royal Harem, and of Meryra II., the royal scribe, at el-Amarna there are elaborate representations of Akhenaten and Nefertiti receiving the tribute of the various provinces of the empire, including that of Syria. These date to the twelfth year of the reign. The inscription in the tomb of Huya runs as follows: "Year 12, the second month of winter, the eighth day. Life to the Father, the Double Ruler, Aten-Ra, who gives life for ever and ever! The King of the South and North, Nefer-kheperu-ra and the Queen Nefertiti, living for ever and ever, made a public appearance on the great palanquin of gold to receive the tribute of Syria (Kharu) and Ethiopia (Kush), the West and the East; all the countries collected at one time, and the islands



DEATH-MASK OF AKHENATEN (*p.* 290)
From Petrie's "Tell el Amarna" (Methuen)

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

in the heart of the sea, bringing offerings to the King on the great throne of Akhetaten for receiving the imposts of every land, granting to them the breath of life." No doubt a certain amount of tribute came in from Syria even up to a comparatively late date in the reign; we gather as much from the references to it in the letters of all parties; but just how much weight is to be attached to the pompous scene of Asiatic prostration before Pharaoh may be judged from the reference to the "islands in the heart of the sea" in the tomb of Huya, and the pictures of Hittites in that of Meryra II. In the tomb of Huy, the viceroy of Ethiopia under Tutankhamen, we have the standard representation of tribute from the four quarters of the world, with this inscription over the Asiatics: "The chiefs of Retenu the Upper, who knew not Egypt since the days of the gods, are craving peace from His Majesty. They say: 'Give to us the breath which thou givest, O Lord! Tell us thy victories; and there shall be no revolvers in thy time, but every land shall be in peace.'" Egypt, therefore, claimed a certain right in Syria, even after the disasters of the last years of Akhenaten. But again the inscription is open to grave suspicion. Why should the viceroy of Ethiopia present to the king the tribute of Syria? The statement that the Syrian tribute-bearers "knew not Egypt from the days of the gods" shows how much of the inscription is simply rhetoric, the common form of an Egyptian document. We have to remember, moreover, that Tutankhamen evidently campaigned in Asia during his short reign, and that even if he did receive tribute from Syria it may have been more the fruit of this campaign than of any inherited authority; while the statement, "There shall be no

The Amarna Age

revolters in thy time," points to this importance of the revolt in the time of his predecessors.

Altogether we may conclude that, while the downfall of Egyptian authority in Southern Palestine was perhaps not so complete as has sometimes been supposed, the collapse in the northern part of the Asiatic province was virtually total. Even after the victories (such as they may have been) of Tutankhamen, and those of Horemheb, the condition of things was thus described to Seti I. by his Intelligence Department—"One came to say to His Majesty: 'The vanquished Shasu, they plan rebellion. Their tribal chiefs are gathered together, rising against the Asiatics of Kharru. They have taken to cursing and quarrelling, each of them slaying his neighbour, and they disregard the laws of the palace.'"

It is quite obvious from this quaint and pithy description that the state of affairs at the beginning of Seti's reign was practically identical with that which had prevailed in the time of the Amarna letters, and that the reconquest of Asia had to begin almost from the frontiers of Egypt proper. That this was so is manifest from the details of Seti's first campaign, in which he had to fight his way right up through Palestine. He and his son Ramses II. regained for Egypt practically the whole southern portion of the former Asiatic empire; but not even the persistence of these two proud and stubborn soldiers could win back the north. Henceforward Egypt held, but with a none too certain grasp, Palestine, with Tyre and the Phœnician coast south of the Litany. But even this "represented but a small third of what she had once conquered there"; the rest was total loss.

The repercussion of the disasters in Asia upon home

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

affairs in Egypt must have been momentous. Akhenaten and his advisers might shut their ears to the pitiful appeals of the Asiatic vassals; but as messenger after messenger came down into Egypt with news of ever-growing disaster, it must speedily have become impossible to hide the truth from the community. Towards the latter days of the reign, the eastern frontier was swarming with Asiatic refugees—as Constantinople, in our own time, has swarmed with refugees from Russia—and their miserable plight, and their bitter comments on the way in which they had been deserted in the hour of their need by their overlord, must have formed an ironic commentary on the sentiments of goodwill and peace which breathed in Akhenaten's Hymns. The Vienna fragment from the pre-regal tomb of Horemheb gives us a vivid picture of the state of things, in the shape of the instructions issued by Horemheb, as superior officer, to his subordinate officials on the frontier. “. . . Asiatics and others have been placed in their abodes . . . they have been destroyed, and their town laid waste, and fire has been thrown . . . They have come to entreat the Great-in-Strength to send his mighty sword before . . . Their countries are starving, they live like goats of the mountain, their children . . . saying, ‘A few of the Asiatics, who knew not how they should live, have come begging a home in the domain of Pharaoh (L! H! S!) after the manner of your fathers’ fathers since the beginning, under . . . Now the Pharaoh (L! H! S!) gives them into your hand, to protect their borders.’”

The dispossessed priests of Amen, to whom must by now have been joined the priesthoods of the other proscribed gods of the land, would not be slow to use the

The Amarna Age

plight of these refugees, and the news of disaster and shameful supineness which they brought, as evidences of how the anger of the true gods was falling on the land which had permitted a madman to dishonour its sacred traditions. One can imagine also how the soldier-class, with the memories of the victories of their fathers and grandfathers still fresh in their hearts, would rage at their impotence, and the incomprehensible policy which caused it, as each fresh report of loss and overthrow came in from the north. The wonderful thing is that, with all the mass of discontent and hatred which must have been seething in the nation, there should have been no overt attempt at revolution, and the substitution of a normal Pharaoh for him whom the priests now called "that criminal of Akhetaten." Either Akhenaten had a much firmer hand in domestic affairs than in foreign matters, and was better served at home than abroad, or else the native Egyptian of 1360 B.C. was a much more placid and long-enduring man than his predecessors and descendants have often showed themselves to be under far stronger monarchs than Akhenaten.

In any case, beneath a mask of outward obedience and conformity to the royal commands, the nation, as a whole, was thoroughly alienated, not only from the king's religious ideas, which had probably never been understood and appreciated save by a few, but from the royal person and house; while the legislation of Horemheb shows us how completely the bonds of law and morality had been relaxed during the disastrous reign of pietism.

Deprived of their familiar gods, and unable to comprehend the new god who was offered to them as a substitute, and whom they hated as the cause of all their disasters,

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

the people lost all the sense of the sanctions of religion for their moral code, and the result was a general dissolution of law and order. Shut up within his holy domain at Akhetaten though he might be, yet it was impossible that the king should not become aware not only of the loss of the provinces over which he had fondly proclaimed the rule of his beneficent god, but of the miserable and dangerous state of things even within the frontiers of Egypt. He can scarcely have failed to realise at last that his reign had proved a complete failure, and that the greatest element in making it so had been the dearest treasure of his spiritual being. Even within the court-circle, he must have been conscious, the zeal and conformity which were displayed were due, not to conviction, but to interest; and perhaps the course of events had brought home to him the bitter truth that not even interest had sufficed to keep men like Dudu faithful, in spite of their protestations of loyalty.

The future must have looked very dark to him, as his spirit began to break under the successive strokes of misfortune which were heaped upon him, and as he realised that he was destined, not to the "multitudes of jubilees" which he had once predicted for himself, but to an early death in the prime of his manhood. The outlook was rendered all the more ominous by the fact that there was no male heir to the throne in the direct line. Hatshepsut's reign had indeed shown that a woman might hold the sceptre of Egypt; but Akhenaten could scarcely hope that any of his daughters, burdened with their father's unpopularity, would be able to secure the allegiance of the nation. His eldest daughter, Meritaten, was married to one of the nobles of the court, Smenkhkara (Sakere).

The Amarna Age

The second, Maketaten, died during her father's lifetime ; and the third, Ankh. s. en. pa. aten, was the wife of another young noble, Tutankhaten, who may possibly have been a son of Amenhotep III. by a secondary wife, though this is not certain. The only course open to the king, in order to secure the succession, was to associate one of these two with himself on the throne, in the hope that this action, coupled with his wife's royal descent, which gave him, according to Egyptian ideas, a perfectly valid claim to the crown, might possibly ensure his acceptance by the nation. Accordingly he chose Smenkhkara, the husband of Meritaten, whom he associated with himself in the kingship, appointing him co-regent, probably during the last year of his reign. Akhenaten must have felt, however, that the chances of the familiar expedient succeeding in this case were exceedingly remote, and that the great line of the XVIIIth Dynasty was really closing with himself. Nor was it long before the close came. The king was still in the prime of his manhood, so far as his age went ; but he came of a stock which had for three generations been showing signs of weakening, as evidenced by the deformity and early death of Thothmes IV., and the premature old age of Amenhotep III. ; and his portraits, even if we leave aside the evidence of the bones found in his coffin, whose identification with him whose name is inscribed on the coffin has been questioned, show him to have been of delicate and probably sickly constitution. He had had to bear for sixteen or seventeen years a burden which might have broken down a Hercules ; little wonder that under the strain he collapsed at last. The end came somewhere about 1358 B.C. ; and "the most remarkable figure in earlier Oriental history"

The Collapse of the Egyptian Empire

disappeared from the stage on which he had played a part so conspicuous, and so fatal. He was probably not more than thirty years old when he died, for Sethe's view, that he was at least twenty-five or twenty-six at his accession, seems scarcely a possible one, in face of the known facts of the reigns of his father and his grandfather.

The dead reformer was buried, as he had planned, in the rock-tomb which he had prepared for himself in the narrow winding valley which leads up into the eastern hills at Tell el-Amarna, almost opposite the site of the palace and the great temple. In a side-chamber of the tomb, his second daughter, Maketaten, had already been laid to rest, and the sculptures of the chamber still show the royal family mourning for her who was more fortunate in her early death than they in their lives. But the king was not to be allowed, even in death, the peace which he had so earnestly longed for and so little enjoyed in life. His dreams, we may believe, had at last faded, even in his lifetime, before the hard light of remorseless fact ; ere long his dream-city was to pass away also, and, as the crowning irony of fate, his dishonoured body was to be laid, to eternal oblivion, as his enemies hoped, in the Thebes which he had hated. Few men have ever been subjected to so complete an overturn of all their life-work as this most original of all the Pharaohs.

CHAPTER XI

THE AFTERMATH OF THE TELL EL-AMARNA ADVENTURE

WITH the death of Akhenaten, Egypt was left to face the disastrous situation which had been created by the shock which his reforms at home, and his supineness abroad, had given to the state; and, as has not infrequently happened in cases where the current of a nation's development has been violently interfered with, there ensued a period of confusion, until matters readjusted themselves and got back approximately to their old bearings again. As in the case of the close of our own Commonwealth, and the transition from the Revolution to the Empire in France, there was a time when a set of more or less feeble fumblers did their poor best to gather up and piece together again the shattered fragments of the state machine, and get them into running order once more, only to find themselves quite inadequate to the task, and to disappear, after a short period of embarrassed effort, leaving room for the strong man who really knew his own mind, and was prepared to use the strong measures which were necessary. In the case of Egypt, as so often in similar cases, it was a soldier who forced his way to the front and did the work which Monk did between the Commonwealth and the Restoration, and Napoleon on the failure of the Directory.

Smenkhkara proved totally inadequate to the task which lay before the ruler of the shaken and disunited Egypt which Akhenaten had left to his successor. Had

The Aftermath of the Adventure

he been the strongest of kings, he would yet, handicapped as he was by the taint of heresy and his association with "that criminal of Akhetaten," have found his difficulties almost insuperable; as it was, his position was hopeless. How long he may have occupied the throne (he can scarcely be said to have reigned) is quite unknown. Wine-sealings found at the palace at el-Amarna bear the date of his second year; beyond that we have no knowledge of the reign whatever. He passes across the stage and vanishes, a transient and helpless phantom, and with him disappears his queen Meritaten. The succession to the tottering throne devolved upon the boy who by the romantic chance of excavation and the irony of fate has come within the last three years to represent to the general public more of the splendour and glory of ancient Egypt than all her mightiest Pharaohs put together; but who was, in actual fact, almost as much of a helpless phantom as his predecessor—a mere stop-gap king, who has had far more attention paid to him three thousand years after his death than ever he had during his brief and troubled life.

Tutankhaten was, as we have seen, a noble of the court at el-Amarna, and was married to Ankh. s. en. pa. aten, the third daughter of Akhenaten. In the inscription on the pedestal of the noble red granite lion of Amenhotep III. from Gebel Barkal, now in the British Museum, an inscription which was carved after the court had been removed back to Thebes again, and the king had renounced the Aten heresy, he states that he, Tutankhamen, "restored the buildings of his father Amenhotep III.;" and it is quite possible that he may have been a son of Amenhotep by a secondary wife, in which case he

The Amarna Age

would probably be a somewhat older man than he has generally been held to be ; but it is quite as likely that the word "father" is only used in the sense in which kings frequently refer to their predecessors, and that his only claim to the throne was through his marriage to a princess of the blood royal—a perfectly legitimate claim, according to Egyptian ideas. The preliminary results of the investigation of his mummy, so far made public by Mr. Howard Carter, seem to indicate that his age at death was not more than eighteen ; and should fuller examination confirm this view the theory of direct descent from Amenhotep III. must be given up as impossible. The prominence of the name of his queen in inscriptions of the reign points in the same direction and suggests that he derived his title through his wife rather than through his own descent from the royal stock.

How long after his accession the new king found it possible to maintain his position and his court at his father-in-law's capital we do not know. At all events he began his reign as still a devout worshipper of the Aten, and continued his adherence to Aten long enough for the completion of the golden throne which was found in his tomb ; for in the exquisite panel of coloured inlay which adorns the back of the throne he is represented, along with his queen, as overshadowed by the Aten disk with its human-handed rays ; while, wherever his cartouche appears on the throne in inlay it still bears his original style of Tutankhaten, though where it occurs in the gold work, which could be more easily altered, it has been changed to Tutankhamen. It has been suggested that the change of religion and capital came within a year of Tutankhamen's accession ; but the evidence which would settle the point

The Aftermath of the Adventure

has not yet been forthcoming, and, after all, the matter is not of first-class importance. A little sooner or a little later, the new king found the pressure of circumstances and the reactionary zeal of his subjects too strong for him. Whatever his real feelings and those of his queen may have been, they were obliged to yield to the power of the Amen priesthood, backed by the general sentiment of the nation. The king and queen suffered official conversion, and changed their names to Tutankhamen and Ankh. s. en. amen, so that the hated name of the Aten might no longer offend the susceptibilities of priests and people.

The next step was the undoing of all the work which Akhenaten had done at Tell el-Amarna. No doubt the priests of Amen would willingly have seen the town which they hated swept utterly from the face of the land ; but actually there was no need for such an extreme step. Akhetaten was nothing apart from the man who created it, and the court which he had established there. The court once removed again to Thebes, the place would speedily be deserted, and remain only as a monument of the failure of the sacrilegious denial of the ancient gods of Egypt. Erelong this course was forced upon Tutankhamen by the reactionary party in whose grip he now found himself. He was obliged to remove his court to Thebes ; and the City of the Horizon, robbed of all that had made its glory and its prosperity, was left in desolation to maintain what was left to it of life as it best might. The faïence and glaze works which had been established in the city would no doubt continue their activity for a little while ; but they had been created almost entirely to serve the needs of the court which had now deserted the

The Amarna Age

place. The demand for their output vanished along with the nobles who had created it, and the inevitable result followed. The manufactures of the town speedily languished and decayed; the workmen followed the example of the nobles, and went to where there was an outlet for their industry; their humbler dwellings fell into yet swifter decay than had overtaken the mansions of the courtiers; and, perhaps before that generation had closed, the beautiful dream-city of Akhenaten was left to the bats and the owls, and the slowly encroaching mantle of the desert sands. Now and again the silence of its deserted streets was broken by the noise of the workmen of some of the later Pharaohs, seeking in the vacant chambers of palace and temple for materials which might be re-used, when the hated names of the heretic king and his god had been hammered out, in the service of Amen or of his vicegerents at Thebes; but soon even that destroying activity ceased, and the crumbling walls were gradually buried under the all-conquering sand, till the spade of the modern explorer should force them to give up, after three thousand years of oblivion, the fragments of that story which we have been trying to piece together.

At Thebes, Tutankhamen and his queen must have found themselves more or less the helpless puppets of the victorious priests of Amen. Whatever their own convictions may still have been, they were forced to act in conformity with the wishes of the priesthood, and a complete reversal of the policy of Akhenaten was exacted of the Pharaoh as the price of his continuance on the throne. The measure which Akhenaten had meted to the Amenite faith was now meted out in turn to that of the Aten, and throughout the land the ancient gods were

The Aftermath of the Adventure

restored to all their former dignities, while the worship of the Aten was everywhere proscribed. On the great stele of Tutankhamen, found by Legrain at Karnak in 1905, the king has recorded, with what feelings in his heart we may imagine, the state of religion in the land on his accession, and the steps which he took (or which were forced upon him) towards remedying it. "For when His Majesty was crowned as king, the temples of the gods were desolated from Elephantine as far as the marshes of the Delta. . . . Their holy places were forsaken, and had become desolate tracts . . . their sanctuaries were like that which has never been, and their houses were trodden roads. The land was in an evil pass, and as for the gods, they had forsaken this land. If people were sent to Syria to extend the borders of Egypt, they prospered not at all; if men prayed to a god for succour, he came not . . . if men besought a goddess likewise, she came not at all. Their hearts were deaf in their bodies, and they diminished what was done. Now after days had passed by these things, His Majesty appeared upon the throne of his father, he ruled the regions of Horus . . . His Majesty was making the plans of this land, and the needs of the two regions were before His Majesty, as he took counsel with his own heart, seeking every excellent matter, and searching for profitable things for his father Amen, fashioning his august emanation out of pure gold, and giving to him more than was done before."

One may have one's doubts as to the taking counsel with his own heart, about which Tutankhamen thus speaks, and believe that the counsel by which he had to guide his actions was far indeed from being that of his

The Amarna Age

own heart ; but there can be no doubt as to the literal truth of that part of the statement which refers to the new glories which marked the restoration of Amenism throughout the land. The priests were victors ; and they exploited their victory to the utmost. The attempt to curb the pride and power of the priesthood had only resulted in binding their yoke more heavily than ever on the necks of the people, and henceforward the land was hag-ridden by triumphant Amenism, until at last all the vitality was sucked out of the state, the literature, the art, and the religion of Egypt by this incubus.

The exultation of the priests in their triumph is reflected in the furious hymn to Amen which is preserved on an ostrakon in the British Museum, and which is little more than a howl of savage joy at the downfall of Akhenaten and all his works.

“Thou findest him who transgresses against thee ;
Woe to him who assails thee !
Thy city endures ;
But he who assails thee falls.

The sun of him who knows thee not goes down, O Amen !
But as for him who knows thee, he shines.
The forecourt of him who assailed thee is in darkness,
But the whole earth is in light.
Whoever puts thee in his heart, O Amen,
Lo, his sun dawns.”

Priesthoods in all lands and ages have seldom, in their hours of triumph, proved themselves capable of that magnanimity which “ wars not with the dead ” ; and the priesthood of Amen did not offer any exception to the general rule. With a malignity which seems to our ideas almost diabolical, when we remember the Egyptian craving for personal immortality, they endeavoured to secure that

The Aftermath of the Adventure

the enemy of their faith should be destroyed in the other world, as his works had been in this. The hope of immortality was linked, in Egypt, with the preservation of the name and memory of the dead; and therefore the priests endeavoured to secure the destruction of the name of Akhenaten from off the earth, and from the memories of men. Not only was the hated name erased from every inscription throughout the land—a proceeding in which they could indeed plead the evil precedent which the dead king had himself set—but the very mention of it was forbidden. Henceforward, Akhenaten was to be spoken of only as “that criminal of Akhetaten,” a practice which would gradually, as it became more completely adopted, wither the dead man’s life in the underworld to nothingness.

Such malignity was sufficiently horrible; but it did not stop even there. We have seen that the dead king was buried in the tomb which he had prepared for himself at Akhetaten; but apparently, when Tutankhamen was forced to remove the seat of government to Thebes, there was still sufficient love in the hearts of the family and friends of Akhenaten to make them wish that his body should not be left to the loneliness and desolation, and the risks of insult and violent robbery which would be almost inevitable if it remained in the precincts of the deserted city. The mummy, wrapped in thin flexible sheets of pure gold, and encased in its splendid coffin bearing the name of its tenant inlaid in semi-precious stones and coloured glazes, was removed from Akhetaten and brought to Thebes. There, of course, no tomb had been prepared during the king’s lifetime, and it was not likely that the existing circumstances rendered it possible

The Amarna Age

for a new one to be now made for one who, far from dying in the odour of sanctity, had perished in his heresy ; but there was available the tomb of his mother, Queen Tiy, whose associations with her son had been so close. If Akhenaten were to find his last rest at Thebes, no more fitting place could be found than in the tomb where lay the mother whom he loved and honoured in life, and to whose early teaching so much of the ruling ideas of his life may conceivably be traced. Accordingly the body of the dead Pharaoh was laid, along with his canopic vases and so much of the funerary furniture as was deemed necessary, in the tomb where the coffin of his mother already lay beneath its great gilded canopy.

It is scarcely possible that the re-interment should have been carried out with such secrecy as to escape the notice of the priests of Amen ; and, as their malice towards their dead enemy grew with each successful exercise of it, they resolved upon a step which, as they believed, would forever destroy Akhenaten's chances of immortality. The Pharaoh who had disgraced his race should no longer be allowed to share the tomb where lay the remains of a queen who, whatever her own views, had been the honoured wife of an orthodox king. The mere presence of the heretic's mummy had already polluted the tomb ; but at least Queen Tiy could be removed from the contamination of her son's company to a more fitting resting-place. What the two puppets on the throne thought when this atrocity was forced upon them, we may imagine ; but they were helpless in the hands of men who knew no mercy. The tomb was opened once more, the coffin and funerary furniture of Queen Tiy were removed, leaving behind only portions of the canopy



COFFIN OF AKHENATEN (*fp.* 399-404)
From T. M. Davis's "Tomb of Queen Tiye" (Constable)

The Aftermath of the Adventure

which were too cumbrous for ready transport, Akhenaten's name was erased from his canopic jars, from his coffin, and even from the thin gold bands which fastened the wrappings of his mummy, and the dead Pharaoh was left in loneliness and shame in the desecrated tomb, his hopes of eternal life utterly destroyed. "The sun of him who knows thee not goes down, O Amen!"

For three and a quarter millenniums the dishonoured tomb kept its secret, and then, in January, 1907, the late Mr. Ayrton, excavating in the Valley of the Kings for Mr. T. M. Davis, lighted upon its entrance. Under his direction and that of Mr. A. E. P. Weigall, then Inspector-General of the Antiquities of Upper Egypt, the remains in the chamber were examined, and, owing to the inscription on the fragments of the canopy, were at first thought to be those of Queen Tiye. But Professor Elliot Smith's examination of the bones found in the coffin revealed the fact that the body was that of a comparatively young man, while the inscriptions on the coffin gave the royal titulary of Akhenaten, though the actual name of the king had been erased. Accordingly it has been generally accepted as an undoubted fact since then that the actual remains of "the beautiful son of the Aten" are those which are now lying in the Cairo Museum, and that he was a man of not much more than thirty at most when he died. Lately, however, this identification has been questioned by Professor Sethe, on grounds connected with an inscription at Oxford which relates to the celebration of the king's jubilee, the argument being that, if Akhenaten during his reign celebrated his jubilee, which nominally took place after thirty years, he cannot have been so young as the person whose

The Amarna Age

bones were found in the tomb. But the thirty-year rule for the celebration of jubilees was by no means so strictly observed as this argument would require, while the material evidence for the identification is so strong as to demand absolute proof on the other side before it is overruled. "The mummy," says Mr. Weigall, "lay in the coffin of Akhenaton, was enclosed in bands inscribed with Akhenaton's name, and was accompanied by the canopic jars of Akhenaton. It was that of a man of Akhenaton's age, the facial structure corresponds to the portraits of Akhenaton, and it has physical characteristics similar to those of Akhenaton's father and grandfather. How then can one possibly doubt its identity?" There the matter rests in the meantime, with still a shadow of doubt lying upon the actual significance of one of the most interesting discoveries of our time, a doubt which can only be removed or confirmed by further evidence—but with a strong presumption in favour of the belief that the remains found in the tomb of Queen Tiy are those of her unfortunate son.

The reign of Tutankhamen, save for the facts of the reaction to the faith of Amen which have already been described, is almost a blank to us. It certainly lasted for over six years, and probably not for more than nine. During that short period the young king and queen, suspect as they must have been in the eyes of the priesthood, were probably little more than nominal rulers, under the shadow of whose royal titles the leaders of the reactionary movement undid, doubtless with the complete approbation of the bulk of the nation, the whole work of Akhenaten. Some attempt was seemingly made towards the re-assertion of Egyptian authority in the southern

The Aftermath of the Adventure

portion of the Asiatic provinces of the empire, and Tutankhamen must have accompanied the army as nominal commander. This is made clear from part of the inscription on one of the Cairo fragments from the pre-regal tomb of Horemheb, the general who was ere-long to force his way to the throne and to take up in his capable hands the task of the regeneration of Egypt. The titles of Horemheb are there given as follows: "King's follower on his expeditions in the south and north country. . . . King's messenger at the head of his army, to the south and north country. . . . Companion of the feet of his lord upon the battlefield on that day of slaying the Asiatics." The expedition in which Horemheb acted as chief of staff, and, no doubt, as real commander, under the nominal leadership of a Pharaoh who can only have been Tutankhamen, can scarcely have been on any very large scale, having regard to the disorganised state of things in Egypt; but at least it sufficed to give the Pharaoh some shadow of a title to authority over a part of the empire of his ancestors, and to induce some of the Asiatic tribes to send offerings which could be listed as tribute, without putting too great a strain upon the credulity of the nation. Such as the gain was, it was made the most of. In the tomb of Huy, who was "King's Son of Kush," or Viceroy of the South, under Tutankhamen, there appears a scene in which Huy and his brother Amenhotep present to the Pharaoh the tribute of the south and the north. We have already referred to that part of the inscription which promises that there shall be no revolvers in the time of Tutankhamen, and to the somewhat suspicious circumstance that the tribute of the north should be presented by the

The Amarna Age

viceroy of the south. The rest of the document which is of importance for our purpose runs thus: "Bringing in all the tribute to the Lord of the Two Lands, the presents of Retenu the wretched; by the king's messenger to every country, the King's Son of Kush, Governor of the southern countries, Amenhotep, triumphant. Vessels of all the choicest of the best of their countries, in silver, gold, lapis lazuli, malachite, every costly stone. All the chiefs of the north countries they say: 'How great is thy fame, O good God! How mighty thy strength! There is none living in ignorance of thee.'" Whatever may be the solidity (or want of it) of the facts behind this claim, the fact that it is made shows at least that that national spirit was beginning to revive again, which, in the next dynasty, was to lead Seti I. and Ramses II. to their determined efforts to regain Egyptian supremacy over the lost provinces.

Beyond these scanty facts we have practically no knowledge of the events of the reign of Tutankhamen, whose actual relics in Egypt, apart from the wonders of his tomb, are almost negligible; and it is one of the ironies of history that a Pharaoh who is one of the least noteworthy of the many who sat upon the throne of Egypt should offer to us, in his funerary furnishings, by far the most gorgeous and complete example of the magnificence with which a king of the Empire period was surrounded in life, and which was lavished upon his body after death to ensure his comfort and safety in the underworld. That this should be so we owe, of course, not to any unrecorded greatness on the part of Tutankhamen, nor, as has been suggested, to some wonderful and also unrecorded renaissance of the Egyptian spirit and art, but

The Aftermath of the Adventure

simply to the fact that, alone of all the Pharaohs, Tutankhamen has had the fortune to escape, save for a comparatively trifling and unsuccessful attempt, dating not very long after his interment, the attentions of those native tomb-robbers who have rifled every other royal tomb in Egypt from the time of Mena onwards. Whether the robbers who disturbed the rest of Tutankhamen were frightened away from their prey, or whether they found enough to satisfy their greed in easily portable form, the fact remains that the bulk of Tutankhamen's funerary equipment has been left, not undisturbed, but at all events undestroyed. Its quantity, and still more its quality, is such as to make us wonder ruefully what we may have lost by the fact that it is one of the least of all Pharaohs whose splendours have alone survived. Knowing what we do of the proportion which Tutankhamen bore as king to some of his predecessors, one tries in vain to imagine what might have been the glories revealed to us had the tomb of Amenhotep III., for instance, been found intact by Devilliers in 1799, instead of having been looted, as we know it to have been, by five Theban scoundrels, somewhere about 1120 B.C. But such regrets are vain, and we can only be thankful that though so much has been lost, so much has still been preserved.

The death of Tutankhamen, probably in early manhood, brought to a close the great line of the XVIIIth Dynasty; for his successor, Ay, had not, so far as is known, any connection with the solar stock. The examination of the dead king's mummy has revealed his age, and it is possible that the cause of his death may be disclosed to us on the completion of Mr. Howard Carter's work in the tomb. It has been suggested

The Amarna Age

that some of the magnificence of his funerary equipment may be due to the fact that his widow, seeing the inevitable extinction of her father's house in the death of her husband leaving her childless, may have determined to secure some of the most precious treasures of the line from being profaned by ignoble use by causing them to be buried along with the dead king; and such an interpretation of the richness of the tomb is intelligible, and not impossible. However this may be, there can be no doubt as to the critical position in which Ankh. s. en. amen found herself on her husband's death. At most, one imagines, she had been tolerated, in the fierce hatred of all things and persons connected with Akhenaten, for the reason that her presence legitimised the claim to the throne of the man whom the Amenists were using as their stalking-horse in the reaction; now that he was gone, and the crown of Egypt lay waiting for priest or soldier to pick it up and wear it, her life no longer served any useful purpose in the eyes of the statecraft of the time. Discrowned queens, as well as kings, have seldom found the path from the throne to the grave a long one, and Ankh. s. en. amen must have been well aware of the fact that her life hung by the slenderest of threads.

Interest in her fate has been stirred by the extraordinary tablet in Hittite cuneiform found at Boghaz-Keui, and translated by Professor Sayce. The document bears to be an account given by a Hittite king, probably Murshilish II., of certain communications received by his father, Shubbiluliuma, from a queen of Egypt, whose name is given as Dakhamun, with regard to a marriage between herself and one of the sons of the Hittite king. Who the queen in question may be, is another matter. Professor

The Aftermath of the Adventure

Sayce equates her with Ankh. s. en. amen ; but there are philological difficulties in the way of accepting such an equation, though it is hard to say that any metamorphosis of a name in passing from Egyptian to Hittite is impossible. While the identification of Dakhamun with Queen Ankh. s. en. amen must meantime be received with caution, the situation which is described in the document is in all respects such as we have warrant for believing to have arisen on the death of Tutankhamen ; and it seems highly probable, in spite of the philological difficulty, that the account does actually describe an attempt by the Egyptian queen to secure her position against the dangers which were threatening it. For this reason, and because of the intrinsic interest of the document, the translation of Professor Sayce is here quoted in full : “ Now when my father (Shubbiluliuma) was in the city of Carchemish, then Lupakki and Hadad-zalma into the land of Amka (the plain of Antioch) he sent ; so they went ; the land of Amka they devastated ; the spoil of oxen and sheep back to my father they brought. Afterwards the Egyptians of the overthrow of Amka heard : they were terrified. Then their ruler—namely, Bib-khuru-riyas (Neb-kheperu-ra ? If so, Tutankhamen)—just at that moment died ; now the queen of Egypt was Dakhamun . . . she sent an ambassador to my father ; she said thus to him : ‘ My husband is dead ; I have no children ; your sons are said to be grown up ; if to me one of your sons you give, and he will be my husband, he will be a help ; send him accordingly, and thereafter I will make him my husband. I send bridal gifts.’ After my father had heard this he summoned certain Hittites. . . . To Egypt a secretary . . . he despatched, enjoining him : ‘ A true report do you bring back,

The Amarna Age

why she has written the letter to me, and as to the son of their ruler, what has become of him ; so to me a true report do you bring back.'

" When the secretary had returned from Egypt—it was after this that my father captured the city of Carchemish ; he had besieged it for seven days, and on the eighth day he delivered battle one day, and then he stormed it on the eighth and ninth days . . . and thereafter captured the city. . . . An ambassador from the city of Egypt, Khanis (? Hanes of Isaiah xxx. 4), came to him from its ruler, and my father in return a secretary sent to the land of Egypt, who should thus address him as head of the mission : ' The son of their lord—where is he ? Me she has deceived ; my son to the kingship the general of the army has not promoted.' To my father the queen of Egypt thereupon thus wrote back : ' What is this you say—" She has deceived me " ? I, if I had a son, and if I my people and my country . . . to another country I would have written. But no one has had seed by me. And now you say to me this : " There is thy husband ; " but he is dead ; I have no son ; so I have taken a servant . . . and to another country in this manner I have not written : to you, however, I have written ; your sons are said to be grown up ; so to me one of your sons give, and he as my husband in the land of Egypt shall be king.' So my father was on his knees, and then the lady soon fulfilled her words and selected one of the sons."

Despite the small obscurities which occur in the imperfect text, it is plain that we have here the outline of a genuine piece of otherwise untold history of a most extraordinary type ; and if the document does not refer to Ankh. s. en. amen, it is hard to see any other reference

The Aftermath of the Adventure

which it can have. The time is that required, the situation is precisely that in which the widowed queen found herself; and it would almost seem that we can trace in the Hittite king's action, or rather cautious hesitation to act, the reason which rendered futile the plucky attempt of Ankh. s. en. amen to save herself from dethronement and the grave. If the frank and straightforward offer of marriage was indeed that of Ankh. s. en. amen, then it is obvious, as Mr. Howard Carter has pointed out, that promptitude was the very essence of the business. Ankh. s. en. amen had seventy days' grace, the period elapsing between the death of Tutankhamen and his public burial when embalmment was completed. Her enemies were scarcely likely to strike before the rites of religion had been duly performed for her dead husband; but as soon as he had been laid in the grave her position, and even her life, were in deadly danger. Prompt action was vital.

The queen, driven by stern necessity, was prompt enough. She can scarcely have been more than seventeen or eighteen, a mere child to face such dangers; but she acted without hesitation. It was the Hittite king, shrewd old intriguer as he was, who bungled the business through his over-caution. Perhaps the memory of how often he had cheated others made him suspect a trap for himself; anyhow, he missed the chance which would have rounded off his life-work with a magnificent conclusion, and changed the history of the ancient world. He was no use to Ankh. s. en. amen unless he sent his son, with troops behind him, at once; and instead he sent his peddling secretary to make further enquiries, while the widowed queen was fretting her short seventy days away. Her second letter, one imagines, has an edge of anxiety about it, and

The Amarna Age

of irritation against the cautious old fumbler in Boghaz-Keui who was risking her life, and his own advantage, because he was too clever by half. It produced its effect, and the prince whom Ankh. s. en. amen had chosen was sent off on his matrimonial adventure ; but it was too late. Shubbiluliuma, for once in his life, had missed the tide which leads on to fortune, and Egypt and Hatti paid for his caution with a century of furious and exhausting warfare.

Ankh. s. en. amen's fate, after the failure of her despairing scheme, is unknown ; probably it was not a pleasant one—we shall never know for certain. Perhaps her daring attempt to save herself by the union of the royal houses of Egypt and Hatti only hastened her doom. At all events she disappears, and the vacant throne is occupied for a short time by an elderly official of the late court of Tell el-Amarna. Ay, the obscure individual who thus forced himself, or was forced by circumstances, into a position for which he can have had but few qualifications, belonged originally to an insignificant rank of the priesthood, from which he is known as "The Divine Father Ay." His wife Ti, however, was a somewhat important personage about the court in the childhood of Akhenaten, being "great nurse, nourisher of the god, adorer of the king." Doubtless it was her influence which secured for her husband the positions which he afterwards held in the court at el-Amarna, where he was "fan-bearer on the right of the king, master of all the horses of His Majesty, his truly beloved scribe." Established at court, Ay exhibited a zeal for the teaching of his master which brought him into high favour, as he tells us in his splendid tomb at Tell el-Amarna : "I was one favoured of my Lord every day,

The Aftermath of the Adventure

great in favour from year to year because of the exceeding greatness of my excellence in his opinion . . . my name has penetrated into the palace, because of my usefulness to the king, because of my hearing his teaching . . . he doubles to me my favours in silver and gold. I am first of the officials, at the head of the people . . . (because) I have carried out his teaching." It is to his tomb that, as we have seen, we owe our only extant version of the longer hymn to the Aten.

But "the times change, and we change along with them"; and this was emphatically the case with Akhenaten's devoted Master of the Horse. It was one thing to serve a living Pharaoh's religious whims, when conformity was rewarded with rich gifts of gold and silver; it was quite another to be true to an unpopular faith when there was nothing to gain and everything to lose by steadfastness. When Akhenaten's death had cut off the Pactolus which nourished the faith of the devotees of Atenism, Ay, like a sensible man, saw no reason why he should continue to be true to a faith which had no longer anything to give him. His new tomb in the western section of the Valley of the Kings shows that he had no difficulty in accommodating himself to the altered conditions. After all, as Petrie puts it, "There was plenty of time for him to forget the new faith, for which he had taken so strong a part in his early days." Now, when he had officiated at the burial of the last of the two Amarna friends who had stood between him and the throne, he reaped the reward of his adaptability, and sat for a little while, another passing shadow, on the throne of the Pharaohs. There is nothing to tell us of what he did or did not do; only we know that by the end of his

The Amarna Age

reign conditions had grown so bad in Egypt that tomb-robbers, anticipating the feats of their successors of the XXth Dynasty, had broken into the tomb of Thothmes IV.; while Tutankhamen had not lain long amidst the magnificence of his tomb before his rest also was disturbed. An instruction of King Horemheb to Maya, one of his officials, bids him "renew the burial of King Thothmes IV., justified, in the Precious Habitation in Western Thebes." Ay has been suspected of having had a hand in the disappearance of Tutankhamen; but there is absolutely no evidence to support the charge. To all appearance he was little more than another puppet who danced, like his predecessor, when and as the priests of Amen pulled the strings.

With the vanishing of this phantom king, the long line of the XVIIIth Dynasty drags to a sufficiently paltry close. The soldier Horemheb, who usurped the throne after Ay, is sometimes reckoned as the last Pharaoh of the XVIIIth, and sometimes as the first of the XIXth, Dynasty. Whether he was one or the other matters little. The fact remains that, with him, Egypt enters on a new chapter of her long history, a chapter which is by no means lacking in brilliant episodes and great accomplishments, but which is no longer characterised by the spring of fresh vitality which had marked the life of the age of conquest, and which shows instead a gradual, if slow, declension in all the elements of national strength—a declension which was to continue, with only temporary interruptions, until the prestige of the great empire had sunk to the level which we find reflected in such documents as the story of the adventures of Wenamon.

We have now to attempt the task of trying to estimate

The Aftermath of the Adventure

the result which the great adventure of el-Amarna produced upon Egypt, and through Egypt, upon the world of the Near East. Noble as were Akhenaten's ideals, it cannot be denied that the consequences of the prosecution of them were disastrous for Egypt, and probably for the world at large. The loss sustained by Egypt is manifest on the face of things, so far as regards her position as a world-empire. Almost all her Asiatic empire had slipped from her control by the close of Akhenaten's reign; and though a considerable portion of it was temporarily recovered by sheer hard fighting under the warlike Pharaohs of the next dynasty, her position was never again what it had been in the days of the conquerors. Her culmination had passed, and the stars of newer states began to rise towards the meridian as her star slowly declined.

Still more disastrous were the internal results. A great nation, with the command of the vast resources which were still at the disposal of the Pharaohs, and with the spirit which had inspired the land during the earlier reigns of the XVIIIth Dynasty, would not have been long in reasserting her supremacy after its temporary eclipse. But that spirit no longer existed in Egypt. The nation had lost the buoyant confidence which had sustained her in her career of conquest after the expulsion of the Hyksos; she was doubtful of herself and of her ability to make head against the new forces which had risen above the horizon; and, perhaps worst of all, the forces of reaction within the state had not only definitely triumphed, but had gained a position in which they could plausibly claim to have been the saviours of the community. The success of any possible future liberal movement was already fatally discounted by Akhenaten's premature

The Amarna Age

attempt and its failure. Henceforward the Egyptian state was definitely committed to reaction, and it is really from this point onwards that her life, national, spiritual, and artistic, begins to be bound more and more, in a sense in which it never was before, in the fetters of an iron convention. This deadly result of a premature effort after freedom is seen perhaps most manifestly in the subsequent development of the national art, after the intoxication of the new freedom of Amarna had passed away. Previous to that, as we have seen, Egyptian art, though always obedient to limitations such as the Minoan artist never recognised, was by no means the dead, inelastic thing which it is sometimes supposed to have been. On the contrary, it showed itself capable of an elasticity which, had it remained unchecked, might have led it to the anticipation of something of the vitality of the art of the Greek. The finer work of the Amarna school holds the not obscure promise of things far greater than Egyptian art had ever realised, or was ever to realise. But the failure of the whole system of Akhenaten, coupled with the eccentricities which, as we have seen, were latterly beginning to deform the naturalism of the Amarna artists, fatally discredited the movement towards the new liberty. Egyptian art slowly creeps back, as if horrified at the results of its outburst, into the old channels. It is true that in the work of the reign of Seti I., and even in a less degree in that of Ramses II., there is beauty and refinement of a high order; but the living spirit of the Amarna work is felt with steadily decreasing power, until the art of Egypt becomes at last as truly dead as it has often been erroneously held to have been all along. Even the Saite Revival, accomplished as all its important

The Aftermath of the Adventure

work is, and remarkably as it maintains the great Egyptian tradition of searching portrait work in sculpture, can scarcely be said to be a revival of really living art, but rather only a resuscitation of ancient practice.

So far as regards the official religion of the state, the same is true. Akhenaten's movement, had it succeeded, might have given new life to the dry bones of Egyptian religion, and filled the body of the state faith with a new spirit. The possibility of such a revival was crushed out forever by the triumph of Amenism. The priests of Amen won, indeed, their victory; but, like all such victories of obscurantism over the light, it was a Pyrrhic victory, which carried with it the seeds of the final downfall even of the power of Amen, which never seemed mightier than on the day of the downfall of its challenger. We have seen that Amenism must have had little hold upon the hearts of the generality of the Egyptian people, when the mere decree of Akhenaten could accomplish, even if only for a time, its downfall. Its triumphant return to power did not mean that its hold had been one whit increased by its period of eclipse and persecution. Amen came back to power in the state, but not in the hearts of the people. Under Pharaoh after Pharaoh, and for century after century, the wealth and pride of his priesthood grew, till instead of being a beneficent father of his people, Amen was a vampire sucking out the life-blood of the nation. In the end his priests succeeded in seizing the throne of that Egypt which they had so largely helped to reduce to an impotent shadow of its former greatness; and, when there, they failed as hopelessly as priest-ridden dynasties have always failed. But Amenism no longer meant anything to the common people

The Amarna Age

of the land. The great god of Thebes was simply a great incubus on spiritual life, stiff with gold and jewels, worshipped in temples so vast and with a ritual so gorgeous as to have no longer any relation to the needs and aspirations of living men and women ; and anything that was really living in the faiths of the ancient gods of Egypt was linked, not with the dead body of Amenism, but with the Osirianism which at least kept touch with the most permanent and universal of Egyptian religious feelings—the craving for immortality. So far as their power extended, the priests of Amen, in slaying Atenism, did not only destroy a competing creed ; they slew Egyptian religion, at least as officially manifested.

But while Akhenaten's effort may thus seem to have resulted in nothing but unmitigated disaster for his nation in almost every respect, such a view of the facts would do injustice alike to the reality, and to the influence of a great movement. No great truth once proclaimed to the world ever dies, or permanently loses its influence. Atenism as a state religion, imposed by royal authority upon an unwilling nation, had proved a disastrous failure ; but there was that in Atenism which belongs to the enduring fabric of true religion, and deals with a permanent craving of the human heart. The universal Fatherhood of God was one of the main articles of Akhenaten's creed ; and that idea, once given to the world, was too valuable, and answered too closely to a deep-rooted human instinct, to be altogether lost in the overthrow of the system with which it had been associated. Atenism perished, but it left behind it the living seed of belief in a God who, because he was the Father of all men, was capable of entering into personal relationship



HEAD OF AKHENATEN—CANOPIC JAR (*pp.* 399-404)
From T. M. Davis's "Tomb of Queen Tiye" (Constable)

The Aftermath of the Adventure

with each man. And thus while the official religion, after a feeble effort to adorn some of its hymns with a few rags of the naturalism which had probably made the strongest appeal in Atenism to the nature-loving Egyptian, stiffened slowly into mere petrified ritualism, separated by an ever-growing gulf from the living aspirations of the people, the thought of God's universal Fatherhood grew and blossomed finally in a form otherwise practically unknown in the religious life of Egypt. Breasted has thus expressed the growth of the idea in the period immediately following the collapse of Akhenaten's reformation: "As we look further into the simpler and less ecclesiastical professions of the thirteenth and twelfth centuries before Christ, the two centuries after Ikhnaton, the confidence of the worshipper in the solicitude of the Sun-god for all, even the least of his creatures, has developed into a devotional spirit, and a consciousness of personal relation with the god, which was already discernible in Ikhnaton's declaration to his god: 'Thou art in my heart.' The surviving influence of the Aton faith and the doctrines of social justice of the Feudal Age now culminated, therefore, in the profoundest expression or revelation of the devotional religious spirit ever attained by the men of Egypt." There is thus no foundation for the assertion, so often made, that Atenism accomplished nothing, and was simply a backwater in the development of Egypt; had it done nothing but the instilling of this conception of the universal divine fatherhood, and its capability of personal relationship with the human worshipper, it would yet be amply justified.

The new sense of intimate relationship with God, and its derivation from the Aten faith, are both seen clearly

The Amarna Age

in a prayer which a scribe of Thebes addresses to Amen :

" Who cometh to the silent,
Who saveth the poor,
Who giveth breath to every one he loveth,
Give to me thy hand,
Save me,
Shine upon me,
For thou makest my sustenance.
Thou art the sole god, there is none other,
Even Re, who dawneth in the sky,
Atum, maker of men,
Who heareth the prayers of him who calls to him,
Who saveth a man from the haughty,
Who bringeth the Nile for him who is among them,
Who leadeth all men.
When he riseth, the people live,
Their hearts live when they see him,
Who giveth breath to him who is in the egg,
Who maketh the people and the birds to live,
Who supplieth the needs of the mice in their holes,
The worms and the insects likewise."

It is impossible to miss the debt, unconscious perhaps, but none the less real, of this worshipper of Amen to the thoughts which first found full expression in the great hymn to the Aten, for the very spirit of the hymn breathes throughout the prayer. But still more remarkable was the flower which blossomed from this root idea of personal relationship to God. One of the most notable defects in the religious consciousness of the Egyptian, generally speaking, is his almost total lack of the sense of sin and of the need of deliverance from sin. "We do not find," says Petrie ("Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt," p. 122), "any trace in the Egyptian mind of the idea of sin." "The essential mode of justification

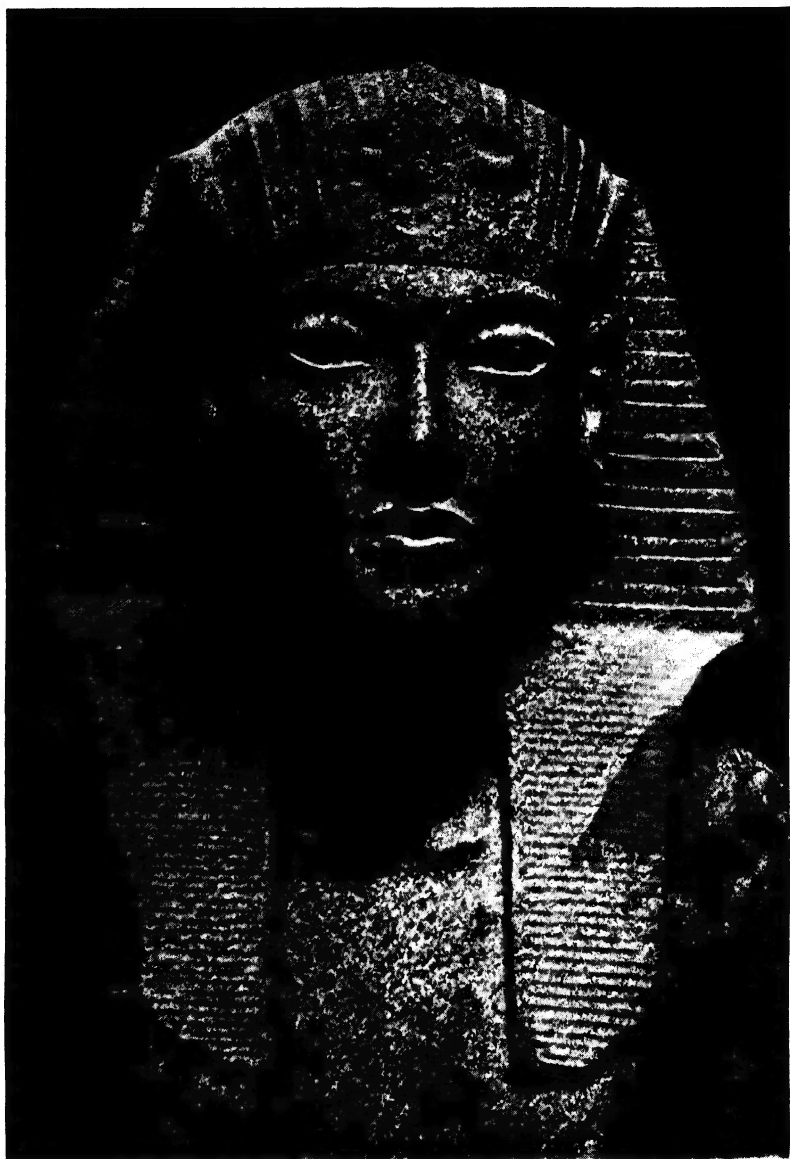
The Aftermath of the Adventure

in the judgment," says the same writer again, "was by the declaration of the deceased that he had not done various crimes; and to this day the Egyptian will rely on justifying himself by sheer assertion that he has not done wrong, in face of absolute proofs to the contrary" ("Religion of Ancient Egypt," p. 89). But there is a period in the history of Egyptian religion when this is entirely changed for a season, and when the religious Egyptian becomes possessed by a sense of the burden of sin, and the need of deliverance from it, not, indeed, as deep and poignant as that which marked his neighbour, the sombre Semite of Babylonia or Assyria, but sufficiently noteworthy; and this period is that which followed upon the spiritual stirring of the dry bones caused by Atenism. The following passage from the stele of Nebre, a tomb-painter in the Theban necropolis—a stele erected to commemorate the goodness of Amen, who had saved the painter's son, Nakht-Amon, "when he lay sick unto death, being in the power of Amen, because of his sin"—is one which would have been impossible at any other stage of Egyptian religious development. "He saith, Though the servant be wont to commit sin, yet is the Lord wont to be gracious. The Lord of Thebes spends not the whole day wroth. If he be wroth for the space of a moment, it remaineth not. (Amen) turns to us in graciousness, Amen turns with his breath. By thy *kā*, thou wilt be gracious, and that which is turned away will not be repeated" (*cf.* for the whole passage Psalm xxx., and especially verse 5). Such an utterance would be nothing unusual in Hebrew or Babylonian religious literature; in Egyptian it is a phenomenon of this particular time.

The Amarna Age

Not less remarkable is a prayer which is preserved in the Anastasi Papyrus: "Thou sole and only one, thou Harakhte who hath none other like him, protector of millions, saviour of hundred-thousands, who shieldeth him that calleth upon him, thou lord of Heliopolis ; punish me not for my many sins. I am one ignorant of his own body, I am a man without understanding. All day I follow after my own dictates as the ox after his fodder." "I have gone astray like a lost sheep ; seek thy servant," says the Hebrew Psalmist. "So foolish was I, and ignorant ; I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless I am continually with thee " (Psalms cxix. 176, and lxxiii. 22, 23).

The *post hoc* argument may not always be conclusive ; but it is hard to see what other cause than the influence of Atenism can be assigned for this sudden quickening of the religious consciousness, never before felt in the long history of Egyptian religion, and now arising precisely after the foundations of the established religious order had been shaken by the convulsion of Akhenaten's reforms. That the quickening was not an enduring thing is not to be laid to the charge of the faith of Akhenaten, but to that of the official religion, with its deadening reliance upon ritualism and on the magical power of consecrated formulas. In short, the results of Akhenaten's attempt to inspire Egyptian religion with a new spirit present a curious similarity to those which have so often followed upon attempts to quicken the religious consciousness of nations which have been for ages under the benumbing influence of a great state church, over-organised and over-ritualised, to the practical exclusion of the spiritual element which is the life of religion. The



STATUE OF TUTANKHAMEN—GRANITE, CAIRO (*pp. 393 et seq.*)

The Aftermath of the Adventure

dawning of the new idea of God, its battle against the opposition of vested interests, its temporary triumph, followed by the victory of the reaction, the slow working in the popular mind of the leaven of truth even after the overthrow of the system which attempted to embody it, and its gradual extinction at last beneath the dead-weight of the state worship, which itself remains impotent for real uplift of its people, and only powerful as an agent of the state and a champion of obscurantism, till it is finally swept away as a cumberer of the ground; this is a sequence which has been frequently repeated in the history of nations and churches. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about it is that the state church, in every land and age, seems to have been incapable of learning the lesson of it all, as Amenism proved incapable of learning the lesson of its own experience, and fell at last because it had no place in the hearts of a people to whom, even after its bitter lesson at the hands of the Aten faith, it had nothing to offer but the empty husks of a barren ritual.

On the international situation, the reactions of the great adventure were not less important than on the internal affairs of Egypt, and certainly not less disastrous. In the northern part of the Asiatic empire there was substituted for the comparatively mild and beneficial suzerainty of Egypt the overlordship of the Hittites—a change which, to say the least, can scarcely have been for the better. When we are better acquainted with Hittite legal and moral standards, as revealed in their codes, we shall be in a better position to say how they compare with those of the other great nations of the period. At present, from what is known, it does not seem that they were in any sense markedly inferior, from the ethical standpoint, to either

The Amarna Age

Egypt or Babylonia. But whatever may be the case in this respect, it is at least certain that the substitution of Hittite for Egyptian influence in Syria was the substitution of an inferior and less developed culture for one which had reached the highest level known to the world at the time—no small disaster in itself.

In Palestine the situation was left, until the warlike Pharaohs of the XIXth Dynasty partially succeeded in restoring Egyptian authority, in the hands of groups of scuffling tribes, whose relations with one another were pretty much the same as the happy ones which we find pictured at a later period in the Book of Judges ; a result which must have added incalculably to the sum of human misery for many years.

Probably worst of all, in its permanent effects, was the fact that Hittite and Egyptian were now committed to generations of mutually destructive strife. Had Egypt not been paralysed by her internal dissensions at this point, it might have been possible for her, with the aid of the Mitannian alliance, to maintain her grasp on the northern portions of her empire, to restrict, even without warfare, the southward advance of the Hittite Confederation, and to confine Hatti within what were, after all, her natural limits ; while the rapid advance of an aggressive Assyria would have been retarded, a result which, with all respect to Assyria's ability and achievement, would surely have been to the advantage of the general interests of humanity.

Even after the Hittites had succeeded in filching from Egypt the northern portion of her sphere of influence, one is tempted to speculate on what might have been the outcome of such a union of Hittite and Egyptian interests

The Aftermath of the Adventure

as would have been the result of such a marriage between a Hittite prince and an Egyptian queen as was contemplated by "Dakhamun" and Shubbiluliuma. Had the two powers, thus allied by marriage, as they came to be a century after, when it was too late, been able to act in concert with one another, instead of in opposition; still more, had a Hittite prince made the Double Crown of Egypt into the Triple one of Egypt and Hatti, the whole balance of power in the Near East would have been permanently altered, and the history of the ancient world would have been a very different story.

Such a possibility, however, was finally destroyed, to all appearance by the over-caution of Shubbiluliuma. Instead of becoming allies, the two great powers entered upon a deadly rivalry which continued for practically a century, and in which the battle of Kadesh was merely an incident; and that fateful century was the period of Assyrian consolidation and preparation for future dominance. When at last mutual exhaustion had taught the combatants a tardy wisdom, it was too late. Both Hatti and Egypt steadily decline from 1250 B.C. onwards; and the mastery of the ancient east falls at last to the younger empire. In spite of her modern apologists, there are surely few who would venture to suggest that the dominance of Assyria was a better thing for the world than that of Egypt would have been. There are many reasons why the Amarna Age should be worthy of all the study which it has been receiving; but it is this shifting of the centre of gravity of the old world scheme of things for which the events of this age were directly responsible, which makes it in very deed the Crisis of the Ancient World.

CHAPTER XII

THE LEGATEES OF EL-AMARNA : THE PHARAOHS OF THE XIXTH DYNASTY

DURING the feeble and ephemeral reigns of the successors of Akhenaten, the power of the crown had been rapidly passing into the hands of the priestly caste ; but it is possible that the reign of Ay sufficed to convince the priests that it would be safer to have a man of affairs at the head of the state, and preferably a man of the military caste, which had shared with the Amen priesthood the neglect of the Atenist regime. Looking about for such a man, they found him in the general Horemheb, whom we have seen appearing as chief of staff in the Asiatic campaign of Tutankhamen. Horemheb, though apparently unconnected with the royal house of Egypt, was a man of good family, from the city of Alabastronpolis, where his ancestors had been nomarchs. Such opportunities as a soldier could find during the reign of Akhenaten he had used with such energy as to win the gold of valour, the award for distinguished service ; and when the exodus of the vassals of Egypt from Palestine, before the advance of the Habiru, began, he was the official appointed to receive the refugees, and to assign them their districts and duties. As the years passed on, and the power of the throne progressively diminished, he apparently used the world more and more as his oyster, until at last he was

The Legatees of el-Amarna

generalissimo of the army and chief of the royal council. He has recorded the positions which he held as follows : "Greatest of the great, mightiest of the mighty, great lord of the people, King's messenger at the head of his army to the South and the North ; chosen of the King, presider over the Two Lands, in order to carry on the administration of the Two Lands ; general of generals of the Lord of the Two Lands." On the granite group of himself and his queen Mutnezemt, which was sculptured after his accession, and is now at Turin, he has told us the story of his earlier days, supplementing the statements of his pre-regal tomb at Sakkara. "Horus," he says, "placed him at the head of the land to secure the laws of the Two Lands, as heir of the whole land. He was alone without a rival, and the ways of the people were according to his command. He was called before the king, for if there were a quarrel in the palace he opened his mouth and answered and satisfied the king with his speech. All his ways were regulated even as the pace of an ibis, his wisdom was that of the Lord Tahuti of Eshmunein. . . . Behold he was governing both lands for many years, the controllers reported to him in obeisance at the gates of the palace, the chiefs of the Nine Bows both south and north came before him with their arms stretched out, they adored his face like a god. What was done was done by his command ; his reverence was great before the people, and they prayed for him wealth and health" (two-thirds of the familiar prayer for the Pharaoh).

Obviously a man of whom such things were true had only one step more to take in order to ascend the throne. His only possible rival would be the high priest of Amen ;

The Amarna Age

and he and the priesthood were evidently in too complete accord for the claims of a priestly nominee to be put forward against him. On the contrary, the priests did their utmost to further his claim to the crown, and the manner in which his usurpation was stage-managed points quite plainly to priestly influence. A little bit of play-acting was arranged, to take place on the occasion of one of the great festivals of Amen at Thebes. The priests of Amen arranged that on this feast-day the priests of Horus of Alabastronpolis should appear with their god in his barge, as an escort bringing Horemheb to greet Amen, and to claim the throne ; and the play was duly carried through with complete success. "Behold," says Horemheb, "this noble god, Horus, Lord of Hat-suten (Alabastronpolis), desired in his heart to establish his son upon his throne of eternity. Horus proceeded in rejoicing to Thebes, the city of the eternal lord, with his son in his embrace, even to Karnak, until he came into the presence of Amen, in order to give him his office as king, to establish his length of days. Behold Amen appeared in his noble feast in southern Thebes ; and when he saw the majesty of this God, even Horus of Hat-suten and his son with him in the royal entry, to give him his office, and his throne, then behold Amen-ra met him in rejoicing. In the day of giving his satisfaction then he conveyed himself to this chief heir and prince of both lands, Horemheb ; he went to the house of the king, going before him to the palace of his great and noble daughter. She made obeisance, she embraced his beauties, she placed herself before him, and all the gods rejoiced at his appearing."

The "great and noble daughter" of Amen, referred

The Legatees of el-Amarna

to, was the princess Mutnezemt, sister of Nefertiti, and last surviving princess of the royal line of the XVIIIth Dynasty. One imagines that the poor lady had not much choice in the matter. She could marry Horemheb and so legitimise his title to the throne which he meant to seize anyway ; if she refused, there was always room in the Valley of the Kings for another tomb. So the elderly bridegroom was wedded to an equally elderly bride (probably both were by this time between fifty and sixty), and the fiction of an unbroken royal line was duly honoured ; not that one fancies that Horemheb cared very much whether it was honoured or not ; only it pleased his friends the priests, and kept things sweet in that direction.

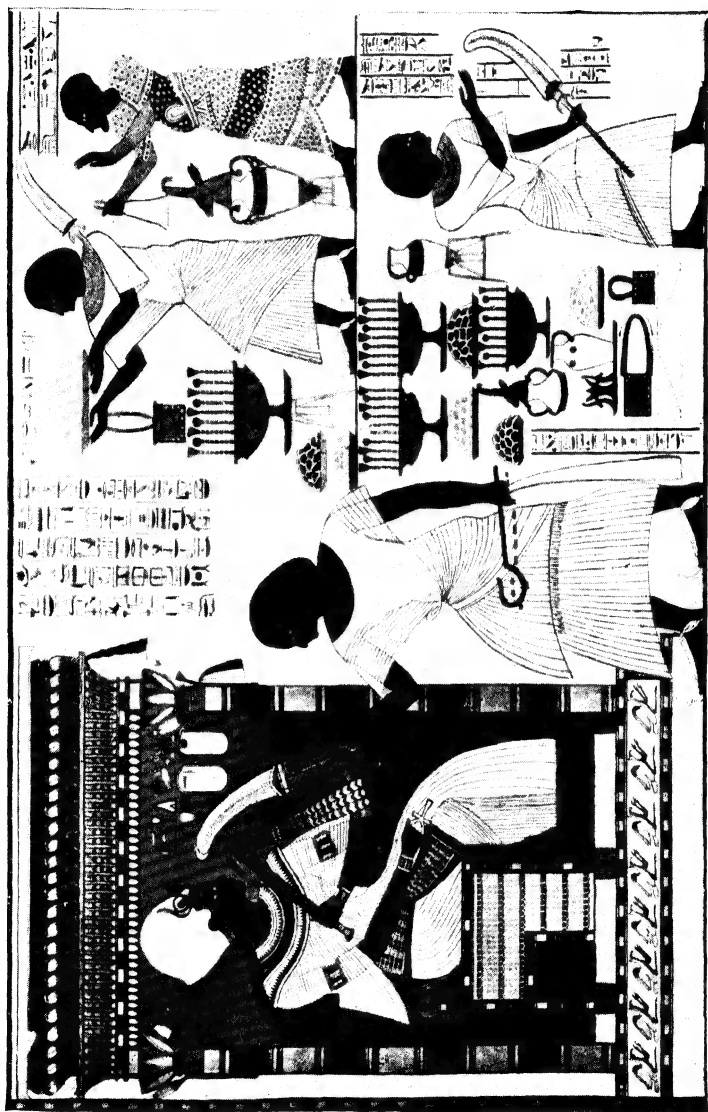
Once seated on the throne by the help of his little puppet-show, Horemheb showed himself a firm and capable ruler—precisely the type of man Egypt needed. On the whole, justice has scarcely been done by the historians of Egypt to his work of reconstruction. Placed as he is between the strangely attractive failure of Akhenaten, and the grandiose achievements of Ramses II., he figures rather as a dull interlude between two bright chapters. This, however, is scarcely fair to a king who, if he was not a man of genius, and though he was certainly a reactionary, was at all events a good, honest business man, who knew what his country needed, and did his utmost to give it to her. Picking up the pieces after a great catastrophe is not work in which anyone can win much glory ; but it is highly necessary, if the stage is to be cleared for the efforts of the star-performers who are shortly to appear. It was the dull but conscientious Horemheb who prepared the way for the brilliant

The Amarna Age

Seti I. and the coruscating Ramses II. ; and without him their efforts would scarcely have been possible.

In the main, Horemheb had two great tasks to accomplish. The first was the definitely reactionary one of completing the undoing of all the work of Akhenaten. The efforts of Tutankhamen and Ay in this respect, possibly only half-hearted after all, had left a great deal still to be done, and the new king set himself to the task with his whole heart. "His Majesty sailed down-stream. . . . He organised the land, he adjusted it to the time of Ra (*i.e.*, according to primitive custom) . . . he restored the temples from the pools of the Delta marshes to Nubia. He shaped all their images in number more than before, increasing their beauty in that which he made. . . . He raised up their temples ; he fashioned a hundred images, with all their bodies correct, and with all splendid costly stones. He sought the precincts of the gods which were in the districts in this land ; he furnished them as they had been since the time of the first beginning. He established for them daily offerings every day. All the vessels of their temples were wrought of silver and gold. He equipped them with priests and with ritual priests and with the choicest of the army. He transferred to them lands and cattle, supplied with all equipment." No doubt this was the part of Horemheb's work which gave the most satisfaction to his priestly supporters ; but it was the least useful part, and indeed his thorough-going fostering of the reaction, and his lavish re-endowment of the gods, and especially of Amen, prepared the way for that tyranny of the Amen priesthood which in the end was the death of Egypt.

Of far greater importance and worth was the second



HUY PRESENTING TRIBUTE TO TUTANKHAMEN (pp. 403-4)

From Lepsius "Denkmäler" III.

The Legatees of el-Amarna

part of his work. This was the re-establishment of law and order throughout the land, and, what was of not less moment, the supervising of the custodians of law and order. The East has always been the happy hunting-ground of official corruption, and in a succession of reigns, either weak or occupied with other matters to too great an extent to attend to the administration of justice, things had got into a deplorable condition, and corruption was universal. The local officials and tax-collectors pillaged the common people mercilessly, and what they spared was taken by the bands of soldiers, who should have enforced local order, but who, in the existing laxity of all things, robbed the peasants of the little that was left to them. Horemheb personally investigated these abuses, and when his investigation was complete, made known his will with regard to them with a plainness and thoroughness which left nothing to be desired. The unjust local official or tax-farmer had his nose slit, so that everybody could see the kind of man they were dealing with; then he was banished to Zaru, the frontier-town of the north-east, a sentence equivalent to the old Roman one of the mines, or the Russian Siberian exile. The pilfering soldier was sharply taught that looting was no longer to be tolerated: "As for any citizen of the army concerning whom one shall hear, saying, 'He goeth about stealing hides'; beginning with this day the law shall be executed against him by beating him with a hundred blows, opening five wounds, and taking away the hides which he took."

It was all very well to make such just laws; but the East has never wanted so much for just laws, from the time of Hammurabi downwards, as for security that the

The Amarna Age

just laws will be justly administered. Oriental administration has in all ages been the paradise of the briber and the taker of bribes; and so Horemheb had to see to it that he made the giving and taking of bribes too unpleasant and hazardous to be worth while. In order to secure this end, he took three steps, calculated to safeguard the interests of justice so far as possible. Two viziers were appointed, one to sit at Thebes, the other at Heliopolis or Memphis, whose functions were simply to supervise the working of the various courts of the land. These great functionaries were solemnly warned against the heinous crime of receiving a bribe. "Receive not the reward of another. . . . How shall those like you judge others while there is one among you committing a crime against law?" In the next place a stringent law against the acceptance of bribes by any official was promulgated throughout the land: "Now as for any official or any priest concerning whom it shall be heard, saying, 'He sits to execute judgment among the council appointed for judgment, and he commits a crime against justice therein'; it shall be counted against him as a capital crime. Behold my Majesty has done this to improve the laws of Egypt." Even more efficient as a defence against corruption was his third step, in which he was far in advance of ancient, or indeed a good deal of modern, practice in the East. Local officials paid to the State Treasury a tax consisting of a certain proportion of their official emoluments, as a condition of holding office; and of course they were in the habit of recouping themselves by exacting from those over whom they were set the amount of the Treasury impost, with a certain variable margin to recompense them for all their trouble. This

The Legatees of el-Amarna

fruitful source of corruption Horemheb cut off at its spring. Officials were informed that henceforward the Treasury tax on their office would cease to be exacted, so that each man would receive the full income of his office. Thus he had no longer any excuse for squeezing the people of his district. Whether he continued to do it or not is, of course, another matter ; but at least Horemheb's legislation on the point was enlightened and far ahead of his times. In accordance with this aspect of his policy is the fact that the Pharaoh evidently understood that it pays to deal liberally with people who are placed in positions of trust, and to keep in personal touch with them. His executive inspectors were not only well paid, but their efforts were rewarded by gifts from his Majesty, who spoke to each man by name, and gave him his reward with his own hand. We need not imagine that by such means Horemheb succeeded in making Egypt into a paradise of good government. There were, no doubt, plenty of abuses left ; but at least he did his best, and the Egypt which he left to his successors after what may seem a dull and uninteresting reign was a very different land from the disunited and distracted country of the years before him. The story of his work for Egypt reminds one forcibly of Carlyle's account of the work of Frederick the Great for the restoration of Prussia at the close of the Seven Years' War. There is the same rough-and-ready justice—the justice of a common-sense soldier—the same personal touch ; and no doubt there were the same shrieks and groans from the official gentry of Egypt as Frederick heard from the *Regierungsraths* and *Kammergerichtsraths* whom he fined and locked up in Spandau over Miller Arnold's water-supply.

The Amarna Age

Beyond the frontiers of Egypt Horemheb can scarcely have accomplished much. The list of conquests on his great pylon at Karnak is not to be taken seriously. Such lists were in later days merely common form among the Pharaohs, and a king put down in his list the names of places which he had never seen, simply lest he should seem less important than the king who wrote the last list. He claims to have made conquests among the Kheta, but Seti's relations with the Hittites forbid us to believe that he accomplished anything against these formidable foes. On the contrary, it would seem that it was Horemheb and the old Hittite king Shubbiluliuma, now in extreme old age, who made the treaty of peace between Hatti and Egypt, which is referred to in one of the opening clauses of the treaty between Ramses II. and Hattushilish III.: "Now the equitable treaty which remained from the time of Saporuru (Saplel, Shubbiluliuma), I will fulfil it." If this is so, then Horemheb exhibited in his foreign policy the same common sense and the same grasp of the realities of the situation which we have seen in his domestic policy. It would have been too much to expect proud and powerful Pharaohs, like Seti I. and Ramses II., conscious alike of the shame of Egypt's loss of her northern provinces and of the revival of strength which inspired the hope of regaining the lost empire, to follow in the unenterprising line which Horemheb had indicated, and to forgo the luxury of fighting the Hittites for the possession of Syria; but it would have been better in the end, both for them and for their land, if they had been less ambitious and readier to continue the friendship which Horemheb had begun with their ancient enemy.

The Legatees of el-Amarna

The XIXth Dynasty, which succeeded to the crown of the revived and consolidated Egypt which Horemheb left behind him as the result of his prosaic but useful reign, has suffered from two mistakes of exactly opposite tendency. To begin with, in the earlier days of Egyptology it was ridiculously over-estimated, owing to the vast self-assertion of that greatest of all self-advertisers, Ramses II., who understood the value of propaganda in a fashion in which he has had no master since. It is not too much to say that, for at least the first three quarters of the nineteenth century, ancient Egypt seemed to the average educated person only a throne for the glory of one individual, and all the Pharaohs were thought of in terms of Ramses II. The XIXth Dynasty was looked upon as the culmination of all Egypt's glories; and all the glories of the dynasty culminated in "Ramses the Great." Naturally a revulsion from this over-estimate followed, and the pendulum swung as far in the opposite direction. The reaction has probably led to an undue disparagement of the actually very solid and valuable work done at least by the earlier Pharaohs of the dynasty; and it ought to be possible to arrive at a middle term between the two extremes which will represent the facts with a nearer approach to truth.

Ramses II. was not the greatest of all Pharaohs, as was once held, still less of all kings. Far from that, he was apparently a much less man than his father, Seti I., whose shorter reign and greater modesty has caused his temporary eclipse by his flamboyant son. But, all the same, both Seti and Ramses were Pharaohs distinctly above the average of the wearers of the Double Crown. We no longer hold that all the glories of things Egyptian,

The Amarna Age

in power, in art, in architecture, culminated in the reign of Ramses ; very far indeed from that. The period of the XIXth Dynasty is now regarded as marking more or less clearly the stage at which the declension of Egypt in all respects began to declare itself, slowly and gradually indeed, but yet unmistakably, and with ever-growing rapidity as the dynasty drew towards its close. Yet that need not blind us to the fact that the Pharaohs of the earlier part of the XIXth Dynasty, on the whole, made the best of a bad job, and accomplished a very useful piece of work. They did not accomplish impossibilities ; but at least this can be said of them, that they made Egypt again one of the great powers of the ancient east, a power to be reckoned with even by the strongest enemy, instead of being contemptuously written off as negligible, as in the latter days of Akhenaten.

Nominally the dynasty begins with Ramses I. This first bearer of a royal name afterwards to be so famous in Egyptian history apparently came to the throne at a somewhat advanced age ; and his short reign of not much more than one year did not permit him to accomplish any work of great importance. It is quite evident that he regarded himself as the founder of a new line, and that he dreamed of his line becoming as famous in Egyptian history as that of the XVIIIth Dynasty, founded by Aahmes the Liberator. This appears from the fact that the royal names which he assumed in his titulary are actually an elaborate parody of those of Aahmes. The founder of the earlier dynasty took the name *Uaz-kheperu-neb-pehti-Ra Aahmes* ; Ramses I. came as near to this as he could without actually plagiarising it, and called himself *Uaz-sutenyu men-pehti-Ra Ra-messu*,

The Legatees of el-Amarna

as though in challenge to the greatness of his forerunner. It was a lofty ambition ; perhaps it is the highest praise that can be given to his line to say that, at least in its earlier sovereigns, it maintained the challenge not altogether unworthily. Elderly as he seemingly was at his accession, Ramses showed in the only great work which he had time to initiate the same ambitious spirit as is revealed in his titulary. The original conception of the huge Hypostyle Hall at Karnak may have been Horemheb's ; the major part of its execution is due to Seti I., and only a fraction of it to Ramses II., who generally gets the credit for the whole ; but the planning of the vast hall and the start of the work were due to Ramses I., whose name is seldom mentioned in the matter.

Seti I., who had been co-regent with his father for a few months before the death of the latter, deserves to rank as one of the best of Egyptian Pharaohs, as his mummy, to say nothing of his many relief-portraits, shows him to have been one of the stateliest and most kingly in appearance. Great builder and restorer as he was, he showed in his work none of the insane vanity which has led his son to claim for himself all over the land buildings for which he did nothing save to engrave his wearisome cartouche for the ten-thousandth time over the work of better men than himself. Following the good example which Thothmes IV. had set when he erected the great obelisk of Thothmes III., Seti in his frequent restorations gave credit where credit was due, and confined the record of his own share in the matter to a single line of inscription, "Restoration of the monument, which Seti I. made."

To Seti is due the initiation of the policy which was to dominate the foreign relationships of Egypt for the next

The Amarna Age

half-century, a policy of resolute effort to reassert Egyptian supremacy within the bounds of what had once been the Egyptian empire in Asia. It is probable, looking at the result in the cold light of fact, that such a policy was a mistake, and that Egypt might have done better for herself had she devoted her energies to the consolidation of her power within her own bounds, and the establishment of a good understanding with the only foreign power which at this stage could possibly be any danger to her. But it was not within the bounds of possibility for a Pharaoh of this time, ruling over a nation which was still smarting under the loss of its northern provinces, and still conscious of its proud tradition as first of the empires of the ancient world, to see things thus dispassionately. His own pride, his nation's tradition, and probably the will of his army, sick of its inglorious position, must have urged Seti to the policy which he initiated in the very first year of his reign, and which his son pursued with a stubbornness and tenacity which might have been worthy of all praise had they been founded on a genuinely enlightened comprehension of what was best for the nation.

The detail of Seti's campaigns in Palestine and Syria need not concern us ; it is sufficient to mark the situation as he found it, and contrast it with that which he left at the end of his effort. We have seen the report which was brought to the king by his intelligence department with regard to the state of Palestine. It revealed a thoroughly disorganised country, where the former authority of Egypt had collapsed, without being replaced by a new authority. "They have taken to cursing and quarrelling, each of them slaying his neighbour, and they

The Legatees of el-Amarna

disregard the laws of the palace." Seti's first campaign carried the Egyptian banners right through this disorganised Palestine, where there could not have been any power of sufficient importance to present any really serious opposition to a disciplined army ; and the advance was pushed both east of the Jordan, where the king erected a tablet of victory in the Hauran, and northwards to the Lebanon, where he exacted from the local chiefs a contribution of cedar logs for the great buildings which he was planning for Egypt. His tablet of victory, lately found at Beth-shean, gives us a quite unexpected picture of the completeness of the Egyptian conquest of Palestine at this time, and incidentally lets us see the organisation of the Egyptian army of the period, which is exactly the same as that which we find at the battle of Kadesh in the time of Ramses II.

On the receipt of the appeal for help against the Prince of Hamath and his allies of Pella, which comes to him from the chief of Beth-shean, Seti makes a disposition of his troops which shows conclusively that he was able to move single divisions across the land without any fear of an enemy sufficiently strong to render concentration necessary. The division of Ra is sent to occupy Beth-shean, that of Amen to conduct active operations against Hamath, while that of Sutekh is sent to Yenoam in the southern foothills of the Lebanon, presumably to secure the division acting against Hamath from any flank attack by the Hittites. The division of Ptah, which is not mentioned, no doubt remained to hold Megiddo, where the king's headquarters apparently were at the time. No sane commander would thus have dispersed his command over a wide stretch of difficult country, unless he had

The Amarna Age

been perfectly sure that his hold of the situation was such that no opposition of any real importance was likely to be met with; and as a matter of fact Seti's confident dispositions were crowned with perfect success, and the operations ended "in one day" with a complete victory for the Egyptians. The strategy of this part of Seti's campaign, viewed in the light of the Beth-shean stele, seems to add another difficulty in the way of the acceptance of the inviting hypothesis that in the advance of the Habiru we are to recognise the Hebrew conquest of Canaan. If the renewed Egyptian command of Palestine was so complete as the dispositions recorded in the Beth-shean inscription contemplate, then we are left with two alternatives. Either the Habiru are not to be identified with the Hebrews of the Exodus and Conquest, or else we must accept the fact that the narrative of Scripture deals with only a single phase, and that a late one, of a process which had been gradually going on for generations, and whose earlier stages are not so much a matter of conquest as of infiltration, modified by periods in which the incomers were subjected to Egyptian domination. The latter alternative seems to receive countenance from the inscription on the stele of Ramses II., also found at Beth-shean, to which reference will have to be made later.

Seti's first Asiatic campaign was rounded off by the capture of a portion of the Phœnician coast, which gave him a convenient advanced base for future operations. His victorious return to Egypt was celebrated by a triumphal entry, in which the king was welcomed at the frontier canal by a great gathering of the notables of Egypt, rejoicing at the re-establishment of Egyptian

The Legatees of el-Amarna

prestige and power in Palestine. One of the most interesting scenes of the great series of reliefs at Karnak, in which the Pharaoh celebrates his conquests, depicts the arrival of the victorious king, with his prisoners, at the frontier station, and his reception by the magnates of the land.

The Asiatic adventure was interrupted by the necessity of dealing with dangers on the western frontier ; and the campaign of the second year was against the Libyans. The second Asiatic campaign finds the king in Galilee, where the city of Kadesh (to be distinguished from the much more important city of Kadesh on the Orontes) was taken by storm, and the short-lived kingdom of the Amorites, won by the wiles of Abdashirta and Aziru, passed once more into Egyptian power. By this conquest Seti was now brought into direct contact with the Hittites, now probably under the rule of Murshilish, the son of Shubbiluliuma. The first encounter between the two rivals resulted, according to the Egyptian record, in a victory for Seti ; but he did not push his advance, and rested content with having established Egyptian authority over the whole of Palestine, with Tyre and the Phœnician coast south of the Litany. At a later stage, he secured for the time his peaceable possession of his conquests by entering into a treaty of peace with the Hittite king Muwatallish, who had succeeded Murshilish.

The rest of his reign of twenty-five years or so was devoted to the internal affairs of his kingdom. Much of the work for which Ramses II. has claimed the credit is really due to his father, and in particular the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak was almost completed by Seti, the work of Ramses being confined to the sculpturing of the columns

The Amarna Age

of the southern section of the hall. Seti's temple at Abydos contains the finest relief work of the period, or indeed of post-Amarna Egyptian art. The technical quality of the reliefs is of the highest, and the somewhat languid grace of the sculptures is very attractive. The vigour of earlier days and the living quality of Amarna work have departed, and we are conscious of an art which presents the familiar features of the earliest stages of decadence, when high dexterity in the artist almost atones for, but cannot quite disguise, the deficiency of vitality ; yet the reliefs of Abydos rank as only second to the best of Egyptian work in their kind. Even where the almost faultless features of the portraits of the king himself suggest conventionality, we are reminded that a hasty judgment on this point would do injustice to the sculptor, by the fact that the mummy of Seti shows him to have been a man of the utmost refinement and dignity of feature, whose portraits only do justice to his natural beauty.

The king's attention was largely given to the development of the resources of his empire by the resumption of the expeditions to the copper and turquoise mines of Sinai, an almost infallible test of the vigour of Egyptian government at any stage, and by the attempt to exploit the gold-bearing deposits of the Arabian mountains east of Edfu. The most interesting memorial of his work in this direction is the ancient fragment of papyrus bearing a primitive map of one of the gold-fields, the earliest extant specimen of map-making. Rude though it may be, it is not much more so than the charts by means of which the gentleman adventurers of the Elizabethan age guided their search for the treasures of

The Legatees of el-Amarna

the New World; and it has probably a much closer relation to reality. In any case, it helps us to remember that the Egyptian of 1320 B.C. was at a far higher stage of development, alike in intellect and in business capacity, than we are often apt to think.

On the whole, Seti I. must be held to be one of the best of Egyptian Pharaohs. He accomplished much; and perhaps the chief glory of his achievement is that it was done, not with the backing of a nation overflowing with fresh vitality, and conscious of abundant energy, but with that of a people broken in spirit by many years of disaster, and no longer buoyed up with the assurance that triumph was normal to them. Thothmes III. was a far greater conqueror; but he found his nation a sword ready tempered to his hand. In the winning of his lesser triumph Seti had first to re-temper a weapon which had lost its high quality. The wonder is not that he did not equal the achievements of Thothmes, but that he accomplished so much as he did. Withal, for an Egyptian Pharaoh, his modesty was scarcely less remarkable than his efficiency. In proof of this fact one has only to compare him with his own son, who, though no fainéant, did no more than his father had done, but placarded all Egypt and Nubia with the record of his miraculous deeds, and had not the least scruple in "conveying" to his own credit all the best work of better men that he could conveniently put his cartouche upon.

The evidence at present available seems to show that Ramses II., who succeeded Seti in or about 1292 B.C., was not originally the heir to the crown, but attained his position as the result of movements which resulted in either the death or the setting aside of the original Crown

The Amarna Age

Prince. However he may have come to the throne, he showed abundant vigour during at least the earlier years of his reign. Into the details of his many Asiatic campaigns it is quite needless to enter ; it will be sufficient to sum up what he actually accomplished by them. During the later years of Seti, the Hittites had apparently so far taken advantage of the respite granted them by the treaty of peace between the Pharaoh and Murshilish as to have advanced once more into the Orontes valley, and to have consolidated their position at Kadesh. Ramses therefore proposed as his immediate objective to drive them out of this strong position. To this end his first campaign was well enough conceived. It aimed at the securing of the Phœnician coast, which might then be used, as Thothmes III. had used it, as his advanced base for his operations inland. In his fourth year, as his stele at the Dog River shows, this object was attained ; but the necessity of devoting a campaign to this purpose necessarily unveiled his plans to the Hittite king, and enabled the latter to call in all his allies, and assemble a powerful army wherewith to meet the real attack of the Egyptian king when it came. The result was that when Ramses, in 1288 B.C., marched into the Orontes valley, and approached Kadesh, he found himself faced by the whole power of the Hittite Confederation. The strategy of the Egyptian king, which brought his army to the actual field of battle in such a fashion as to enable the Hittites to secure a comfortable position on the flank of the long, straggling advance of the Egyptian forces, was hopelessly bad, and deserved, as it almost earned, the total overthrow of the army, which was as completely surprised by the flank attack of the Hittites as any army

The Legatees of el-Amarna

in history has ever been. The tactics of the Hittite king, however, proved as faulty as the strategy of his opponent. The Hittite troops, despite their initial advantage, were handled with extraordinary feebleness on the battlefield ; and Ramses, whatever his defects as a general, at least showed himself possessed of all the virtues of a first-class trooper. The net result of a bloody and indecisive conflict was that the Pharaoh succeeded in extricating himself and his army from a position from which they should never have been allowed to emerge except as prisoners, and that Ramses was able to return home with credit sufficient to disguise the fact that he had failed in attaining the great object of his venture ; for Kadesh was left as firmly as ever in Hittite hands.

In spite of the self-glorification of Ramses, still to be seen on his reliefs at the Ramesseum and elsewhere, and for long taken at their face value, the outcome of this abortive campaign was an immediate extension of anti-Egyptian feeling in Asia. When the king next marched out, he found all Palestine hostile to him, so that he had to begin his work almost from the foundations with the capture of Askalon, in the maritime plain of Palestine. But Ramses, though a feeble general, possessed at all events the merit of indomitable pertinacity. By his eighth year he had fought his way north through Palestine, was campaigning in Galilee, where he wrested the city of Dapur from a Hittite garrison, and had pushed eastwards across the Jordan, where he left a stele to match that of his father. Perhaps we may date to this period the stele which has been found at Bethshean, on which reference is made to the fact that the Pharaoh used Semites in the building of his name-city,

The Amarna Age

Per-Ramses, in the Delta. "Have we not here at last," says Mr. Clarence S. Fisher (*Museum Journal*, University of Pennsylvania, December, 1923, p. 234), "that long-sought-for confirmation of the Biblical record of the labour of the Children of Israel in the Land of Egypt, when they were forced under task-masters to 'build for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Rameses'? This would definitely establish Ramses II. as the Pharaoh of the Oppression, an old identification that has persisted in spite of weighty opposition." Mr. Fisher's opinion may seem a little premature, in view of the likelihood that what we know as the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan was not an incident, but a lengthy process, enduring for generations, and frequently interrupted; but at least it seems not improbable that the find at Beth-shean presents to us an Egyptian aspect of the facts which the Hebrew chronicler had in his mind when he wrote the story of the Oppression in Egypt. It should be remembered, of course, that no definite translation of the inscriptions on the Beth-shean steles has yet been published, and that judgment as to their bearing must be suspended.

The pertinacity of Ramses finally carried the Egyptian banners as far north as Tunip, which implies that at last he had succeeded in capturing Kadesh on the Orontes, or at all events in masking it. His claims to the conquest of Naharina, Lower Retenu, Arvad, the Keftiu, and Katna, may only mean that he raided Lower and Upper Syria; certainly he did not hold these outlying conquests for any length of time; but it is quite manifest from such evidence as the cemetery of the mercenaries in Egyptian service, excavated at Beth-shean, that Egyptian occupa-

The Legatees of el-Amarna

tion was practically continuous in this stronghold of Northern Palestine from roughly 1200 to nearly 1000 B.C. ; and the presence of the steles of Seti and Ramses in the same place entitles us to assume that the occupation dates from the period of these two Pharaohs. Thus we may say quite definitely that, far from being the fruitless attempts at retrieval which they are often represented as being, the campaigns of Seti and Ramses did succeed in re-establishing Egyptian influence in Palestine at least during the period of the XIXth Dynasty, and that even to a much later date Egypt still held important centres in the land. Further than this we are not entitled to go ; but this was in itself no small accomplishment for men who had to do their work with the shaken and dispirited Egypt which was left by the collapse of the Amarna attempt. We may consider that the policy which the two Pharaohs followed was in the end a fatal one for Egypt, and not less so for Hatti ; but at least it was an intelligible policy, and probably the only one which a Pharaoh of the time would have dared to follow, and once committed to it, they pursued it with vigour and tenacity.

How many campaigns Ramses fought in his effort to regain the empire we do not know ; possibly almost as many as his greater forerunner Thothmes III. That he had finally so far succeeded in his object as to impress the Hittites with the sense of the hopelessness of prolonging a struggle in which the parties were too equally matched to make a decisive result probable, is manifest from the fact that it was Hatti, and not Egypt, which in the twenty-first year of the Pharaoh (1272 B.C.) made overtures for peace. By this time the ill-success which

The Amarna Age

had attended the efforts of the Hittite armies had resulted in a palace revolution in which Muwatallish, the king who missed success by so narrow a margin at Kadesh, disappeared, in the fashion in which unsuccessful Oriental monarchs have almost invariably disappeared. Such is the only reasonable interpretation which we can put upon the words with which Hattushilish, his successor, describes the change of sovereign in Hatti: "Since Mutallu, my brother, departed after his fate."

The treaty itself has already been discussed, together with what evidence it presents as to Hittite willingness to admit a certain, even if slight, inferiority. The peace between the rival nations was sealed by the sacrifice of a Hittite Iphigenia, the young daughter of Hattushilish, who was married to the now somewhat elderly and much-married Ramses; and the century of strife between Egyptian and Hittite for the dominion of Syria and Palestine was brought to a close by a compromise. Neither nation had been able to accomplish its heart's desire; but they had certainly been thoroughly successful in preparing the way for the conquests of that slowly rising power of Assyria, which they had only taken into their consideration, if at all, as a comparatively negligible outsider. For the fact that they did not foresee that in thus stubbornly fighting Hatti they were only playing the game of one who was destined to prove a far worse foe to Egypt than Hatti ever was, we are not entitled to blame Seti and Ramses. The worst that can be said of them is that they did not possess the gift of prophecy any more than the statesmen of any other land or time have ever possessed it; the best that can be said—and it is not a little—is that they faced like men a disastrous

The Legatees of el-Amarna

situation, and that, though they did not accomplish impossibilities, they raised Egypt again to the position of a great power, second to none in the ancient east of the time. It was not quite the position which she had held at the beginning of the reign of Amenhotep III. ; but it was one which the men who gained it for their land had no need to be ashamed of.

Thus, then, we have traced the story of the Amarna Age from the first dawning of the idea of universalism in the world-consciousness of a race whose conquests had made their old nation-consciousness seem too narrow a thing, to the last fading of the rays of the conception of personal religion which shone out of the troubled sky of the dying period, before the darkness came, and reactionary Amenism slowly stiffened into the *rigor mortis* of the Ramesside and priestly age ; it remains only to attempt a brief summary of the leading characteristics and tendencies of what is unquestionably the most interesting age of ancient, pre-classical history.

Undoubtedly the outstanding characteristic of the age is its internationalism, " even a certain cosmopolitanism," to use the phrase used by Dr. S. A. Cook. We have to remember, of course, that this was not altogether a novelty, even to the older world of the earlier ages. We have been learning that the Oriental of even the earliest ages was by no means the narrowly parochial, stick-in-the-mud individual that he was once thought to be. Seneferu more than a millennium and a half before the beginning of the Amarna Age has his trading fleet running regularly to Syria, and Pepi II., five centuries later, his expeditions penetrating into the heart of Africa ; while a little later Gudea of Lagash is ransacking the lands of the ancient

The Amarna Age

east in search of materials for his temple of Ningirsu. Human curiosity and the spirit of adventure were already breaking down the barriers of land and nationality, and the peoples were being linked together by recognised trade-routes, both by land and sea. But all this movement towards the recognition of the fact that no nation can live and die unto itself, any more than an individual can, received a new and powerful impulse, first from the great migration of which one of the waves resulted in the Hyksos Usurpation, and next from the expansion of Egypt in the new enthusiasm generated by the success of the war of independence. The results to the Old World of the advance of Egypt into Asia can only be compared, on their smaller scale and their limited stage, with those of the discovery and exploitation of the New World in the Elizabethan period ; with this marked difference, of course, that in the earlier case civilisations which were quite comparable to one another in the stage of development attained were brought into close relationship with one another, while in the later the cultures which were suddenly revealed to Europe, remarkably advanced in many respects as they were, belonged to a stage of development which Europe had left behind her. Yet no one can read the Egyptian romances of travel and adventure inspired by the movements of this period without feeling something of the sense of the same spirit working in the Egyptian mind which wrought in the minds of the adventurers of Spain, Portugal, and England, and urged them onwards into the strange new lands of the West.

Babylon and Mitanni, Assyria, Minoan Crete, Cilicia and Egypt, and even Hatti in the fastnesses of Anatolia, began to realise that, whether they would or no, they

The Legatees of el-Amarna

were inevitably committed to relationships of growing closeness, and were in fact essential to one another. The result is manifest on the face of the Amarna letters. The ancient east has adapted itself to the new conditions with an elasticity curiously at variance with the stock phrase of "unchanging," with which we have chosen to label it. The lands are all linked with one another by a network of perfectly well-defined trade-routes, each of whose stages is controlled by a recognised authority whose duty it is to send the caravans along safely, and who is held responsible when any regrettable incident, such as robbery or murder, takes place. Where the conditions rendered it necessary, letters which can only be described as passports were sent with important travellers, requesting the authorities, through whose lands they were about to pass, to forward them on their errands, and to see to their safety. Egypt, at all events, had a regular branch of the scribal service which was trained for the work of King's Courier to foreign lands. Part of the training, if we may judge from the "Travels of a Maher" in Papyrus Anastasi I., consisted in a course of education as to the geography of the various countries to be visited, and the routes which should be followed in travelling through them ; and the same papyrus suggests that while the courier had his dangers to encounter, he had also the not always decorous or lawful privileges which an official position and a uniform sometimes make easy to an unscrupulous man. Other states would not be behind Egypt in this organisation of a courier service. Similar conditions develop similar expedients in all ages ; and as French has for long been the consecrated language of diplomacy in the modern world, so Babylonian was the recognised

The Amarna Age

medium in the ancient east. Naturally it was not always perfectly written, and the Babylonian of some of the Amarna letters is perhaps not a great deal better than the French of some modern politicians appears to be, if the memoir-writers may be trusted. El-Amarna has furnished us with evidence of the existence of a system of "Easy Lessons in Babylonian," for the use of the scribes of the Egyptian Foreign Office.

The routes by sea were controlled with the same care. Piracy was a feature of the period perfectly well recognised, and was by no means looked upon as disreputable, though it had to be put down in the interests of regular trade. Both Crete and Egypt appear to have had organised coast-guard services, with a system of custom-house inspection of which we have already seen instances. The sea-borne trade of the Eastern Mediterranean must have been a very considerable matter, and the merchants of the lands involved were quite in the habit of dealing with transactions on a scale which would not be considered insignificant even at the present day. We need not take literally Zakar-Baal's estimate of the number of ships trading in his day between Sidon and Tanis, for the Prince of Byblos is obviously talking big to overawe poor Wenamon; but his colossal exaggeration must have had a sufficiently solid foundation to preserve it from being merely ridiculous in the Egyptian envoy's eyes, and, after all, you can make a considerable deduction from 10,000 ships, and still leave a large fleet. The ledgers of Zakar-Baal's forefathers show us the systematic organisation of trade and its continuity over long periods; and it has been estimated that the transactions for cedar alone between Egypt and this house of merchant-princes

The Legatees of el-Amarna

of Byblos amounted in value to over £70,000. Trade had not yet entirely succeeded in substituting currency of the precious metals for barter of commodities, and in Wenamon's time the sum which he at last succeeds in getting from Egypt to pay Zakar-Baal enough on account to induce him to begin cutting cedar is made up partly of garments of fine Egyptian linen, of 500 rolls of papyrus, 500 coils of rope, 20 measures of lentils, and 5 measures of dried fish, the only gold and silver sent being in the form of four gold vases and a basin, and seven silver vases. Apart from this slight cumbrousness of method, trade appears to have flowed as normally and easily between the Mediterranean nations of those days as it does to-day.

The international bonds thus formed by the recognition and supply of interests and needs were strengthened by the recognition, growing out of more familiar intercourse, of the broad communities of thought, especially upon religious matters, which underlay the surface divergencies of the various national faiths. The Egyptian in Asia speedily discovered similarities between one or other of the gods of the alien land where he was and his own familiar deities; or perhaps the Asiatic would point them out to him, for the "jealous God" idea of the Hebrews does not seem to have been prevalent at this stage of Semitic development. Ishtar of Nineveh is sufficiently cosmopolitan to meet Tushratta's request on behalf of Amen-hotep III. with the answer, "To the land of Egypt that I love will I go, I will travel around in it." Later, in the time of Ramses II., the image of an Egyptian god takes up Ishtar's rôle, and "Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons" journeys from Thebes to cure the Possessed Princess of

The Amarna Age

Bekhten, and becomes such a favourite with the prince that he is detained in Bekhten for three years and nine months. The idea of the gods of a land going into captivity along with their defeated nation is of course familiar enough ; but this idea of a kindly interchange of deities and divine help belongs to this period of liberalism in international relations of all sorts. The wandering Egyptian does not only take with him the images of his own gods, but also does homage to the local divinities in the place where he happens to be. He could plead that his king set him the example, for Ramses II. on his Hauran stele worships a local god. The turquoise miners who from time to time visited Serabit el-Khadem, in the Sinai Peninsula, found there a local goddess, " The Lady of Turquoise," in whom they had no difficulty in recognising their own beloved Hathor ; and the great Miner's Temple at Serabit shows how thoroughly the two divinities were identified. It is difficult to see what the images about which Tushratta made such a to-do in his correspondence with Akhenaten can have been, if they were not images of the gods. One does not suspect poor Tushratta, at his time, and with so many more important things to think of, of being a collector of objects of art ; but the presence of a few Egyptian gods might be a help in his many difficulties, especially if they were of gold.

The discovery of these communities of religious thought between the nations led naturally in course of time to the introduction into the various lands concerned of the worship of foreign deities, who were at length either identified with, or associated with, the local gods or goddesses who presented similarities of nature or

The Legatees of el-Amarna

function. One of the earliest of these introductions is Baalath of Byblos, who certainly made her appearance in Egypt soon after 2000 B.C., and possibly even 800 years earlier. Baal himself does not make his appearance with any prominence quite so early, though he occurs in the Hyksos period. He is most prominent in the period immediately succeeding the Amarna Age, when the two Ramses, II. and III., are frequently likened to him in his aspect of "the thundering, roaring god of war." The Egyptians frequently identified him with their warlike god Set, with whom they also identified another warlike Semitic deity, the god Reshpu or Resheph. Generally speaking, Set, as "the general patron of Asiatics," has affinities with any or all of the warlike deities of Asia. The chief Asiatic goddesses who became domesticated in Egypt were Ashtoreth or Astarte, goddess not only of love but also of war, "mistress of horses and lady of chariots," who is associated in Egypt with Hathor, as is also the goddess Kadesh, the "Lady of Heaven, mistress of the gods," who formed in Egypt a triad along with Resheph and the very ancient god of reproduction, Min. One of the favourite Asiatic importations of this period was the Syrian goddess Anath, who was adopted, and had her shrine and priesthood at Thebes as early as the time of Thothmes III., and who came into great favour in the early XIXth Dynasty. The favourite daughter of Ramses II., who was perhaps married to him, was named Bint-Anath, "Daughter of Anath."

If Egypt was thus recognising and adopting Asiatic gods into her pantheon, the same process was going on in Asia with regard to the gods of Egypt. Later in the story, we find Zakar-Baal at Byblos frankly acknowledg-

The Amarna Age

ing to Wenamon the debt which Syria owes to Amen as the great civilising agent. "For Amen equips all lands; he equips them, having first equipped the land of Egypt whence thou camest. For artisanship came forth from it to reach my place of abode; and teaching came forth from it to reach my place of abode." Obviously such an acknowledgment is only the culmination of a process through which Asiatic minds had for long been familiarised with the powers and attributes of the Egyptian god. The devotion of each land was due first and most to its own local divinities, by whom it swore in solemn engagements; but there was an internationalism in religion as in commerce, and men's minds were singularly free from local and national prejudices with regard to the gods. Thus it was not because of the obstacles interposed by national bigotries that Atenism failed to become the religion of the whole ancient east. On the contrary, the universalism of Akhenaten came at a time when the ground had already been well broken for the reception of the seed. Its failure in Egypt was due, not so much to the content of its teaching, as to the breach with the past, and with the vested interests which had grown strong in the past, which was involved in Akhenaten's fanatical devotion to his new ideas; its failure in the Asiatic empire was not a religious matter at all, so far as we can see, but purely political. Atenism failed in the provinces because its founder did not or would not recognise his responsibilities as the ruler of an empire.

On the whole, however, it is possible that too much has generally been made of the failure of this great and most interesting attempt to link the nations of the

The Legatees of el-Amarna

greatest empire of the time together by the bond of a common devotion to a universal god. It so happens that a new and original conception of deity comes to birth, and is offered to the ancient world at a time when the whole fabric of civilised society throughout the east has reached a point of pause, and is in a position of equilibrium in a sense, but of unstable equilibrium. The effect of the introduction of the new ideas, with their practical consequences, or rather perhaps we should say the practical consequences of the character of their originator, accentuates the instability, and the result is the oversetting of the existing balance of power, and the substitution of a new grouping of the nations for the old one. In this sense it was perhaps Atenism which precipitated that crisis of the ancient world which the Amarna Age undoubtedly presents to us.

But, taking a broader view, it does not appear certain that Akhenaten and his new faith must bear the blame of all the turmoil and change which certainly followed upon his great adventure. Every age has its point where it would appear that the existing state of things has, so to speak, exhausted its mandate, and when new combinations and new forces must inevitably be brought into action sooner or later. Such points of pause we meet again when Persia has accomplished her destiny, and Greece takes up the leadership of the world ; when Republican Rome has finished her task, and the new conditions of a world-wide empire call for broader imperial methods to which the old republican traditions were not equal ; or, again, when the revival of Learning came to quicken the dry bones of Scholasticism, and brought the Reformation in its train. At each of these points you meet the one fatal

The Amarna Age

figure, without whom things would probably have taken a line different from that which they did take—Xerxes, Julius Cæsar, his successor Augustus, Luther; and the inclination is only natural to ascribe all the change to the man who seems to sum up the spirit of the time. Actually the probability is that the man was not so much impelling as impelled. The whole current of his times was running towards one end, and he was borne on its foremost wave.

So with Akhenaten and the movements of his time. He appears to be the destined figure which should shake the whole ancient east into a new grouping of its thrones and dominions; in reality he is the outward manifestation of a process which would infallibly have accomplished the re-grouping in any case, though possibly by different methods. No state of things is ever permanent or continues in one stay; and already, even before the figure of the young Pharaoh, eager and questing, enters on the scene, it is possible to see that the old order is being shaken, and that change is on the way. Before the Double Crown was placed on Akhenaten's head, one of the chief figures in the play, Minoan Crete, had been swept from the stage by the sack of Knossos; and the reactions of that great disaster were to be felt through the ancient east for generations to come. Egypt herself had ceased to be the conquering power, eager for adventure, and insatiably curious of novelty, into which she had been transformed for a brief period by the stresses of her War of Independence, and was settling down, under Amenhotep III., to take her ease and enjoy the fruits of her labours, as no nation can safely do for long. The Hittite storm-cloud was already gathering in the north, and Assyria

The Legatees of el-Amarna

was beginning to feel the first promptings of ambition for a place in the sun ; while Babylon was getting almost overripe in her sluggish well-being, and was ready for the first strong hand to pluck her.

If Akhenaten had never been born, or had remained a devout worshipper of Amen to his dying day, the nations would still have settled into combinations very different from those of the year 1400 B.C., and the Amarna Age, called by another name, would still have witnessed the passing of the old order and the inauguration of the new. But it was Akhenaten's fate to launch his new conceptions of godhead and human relationship to it at the very moment when all the forces which were working beneath the constraint of the old tradition needed only to be released ; and his action let them loose, and gave them the first impulse along the line which they followed henceforth by their own momentum.

Whether he permanently harmed Egypt, who can say ? On the surface of things he destroyed for the time her Asiatic empire, and sowed dissensions and domestic troubles at home ; but it is difficult to believe that an essentially unwarlike race, such as the Egyptian, could permanently have held the Asiatic provinces in any case against the warlike races of Anatolia and Mesopotamia. After all, Seti and Ramses regained for Egypt probably as much as she was ever fitted to deal with satisfactorily, and held it for as long as could be expected, in face of the new forces which were rising above the horizon. And if his religious ideas seem to have passed and left no trace, we must not forget the new awakening of conscience, and the new sense of personal relationship to God, which characterises the immediately subsequent

The Amarna Age

period, as it characterises no other period of Egyptian history. To what was this due, if not to the stirring of the religious consciousness of the nation by the ferment of the new leaven? At the very least, Akhenaten gave to Egypt the most interesting period of all her long history—almost the one period of it in which one can feel unquestionably the throbbing of real life, and he gave to her in himself one of the most remarkable figures of that or of any time—the figure of a king who made his faith the centre of all his life, was prepared to sacrifice all for his ideals, and not only possessed a creed, but acted upon it. Few men, even among those whom the world counts great, have done as much.

INDEX

- AAHMES (Pharaoh), 16 *et seq.*
Aahmes Pen-nekheh, 18, 27, 28, 36, 38, 39, 121
Aahmes, son of Ebana, 16 *et seq.*, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 121
Abdashirta, 197, 239, 343, 349, 351-353, 358, 359
Abdi-khiba, 209, 380-384
Abi-milki, 372, 373
Ab-nub, 161
Abraham, 183
Abu-gurab, Abu-sir, Sun-temples at, 334, 335
Accho, 378
Achæans, 178
Adad-nirari I., 229
Addu-dani, 379
Addu-kharradu, 379
Adon and Aton not connected, 309
Agum-kakrime, 218
Aijalon, 381
Aitakkama, Itakama, 197, 343, 349
Akhenaten (Amenhotep IV.), 6, 7; birth of, 94, 96, 98, 100, 116, 144, 208, 209, 224, 229, 230, 233 *et seq.*; and Shubbiluliuma, 235; early days, 236; causes of failure, 239, 341; titular of, 243; letters to, on accession, 246, 247; builds Aten temple at Thebes, 252 *et seq.*; changes name of Thebes, 257; and own name, 257, 258; persecution of Amenism, 258; personal influence in Atenism, 261, 262; change of capital, 262 *et seq.*; devotion to new city, 269-271; bitterness against priests, 272; settles at Akhetaten, 275; representations of, in art, 283-285, 293 *et seq.*; originality as a thinker, 313 *et seq.*; intolerance of, 315; hymns of, 320-333; consistency of, 333, 334; in Amarna letters, 345, 346, 348, 354-357, 362, 363, 367-372, 385; failure and death, 389-391; violation of tomb, 400 *et seq.*; modern discovery of tomb, 401, 402
Akhetaten (Tell el-Amarna), 1-10; situation, 264; dimensions, 264; demarcation, 265; boundary steles, 266, 267; devotion of Akhenaten to, 269, 271; occupation of, 275; houses of, 276, 277; palace, 277, 278, 334 *et seq.*; crafts in, 296 *et seq.*; decorative art in, 298, 299; collapse of city, 395, 396
Akhlamu, 343
Akhutab, 116
Akia, 117
Aki-izzi, 99, 372
Alabastronpolis (Hat-suten), 424, 426
Alashia, 98, 109, 112-115, 205
Aleppo, 52, 53, 194, 205
Al-Hakim, Caliph, 260 *n.*
Alshe, 225, 226
Amanappa (Amenemapet), 357, 358
Amarna, Tell el= Akhetaten, *q.v.*
Amen, Amenism, 141 *et seq.*, 251, 252, 308; triumph of, 396 *et seq.*; incubus on nation, 415 *q.*
Amen-asru, 92
Amenemhab, captain of Thothmes III., 52, 53, 55, 62, 121
Amenemhat III., 160
Amenhotep I., 27; worship of, 143
Amenhotep II., accession of, 62, 64; conquests of, 65 *et seq.*; limits of empire under, 70
Amenhotep III., 8; accession and marriage, 79; character of reign, 81; marriage, 83, 84; marriage to Gilukhipa, 85; campaign in Nubia, 87; palace of, 89, 90; festival of, 90, 91; buildings, 92-94; black granite stele, 93; marriage to Tadukhipa, 96; death of, 101, 231; tomb of, 101; letter to Kadeshman-Kharbe, 122; funerary temple of, 137 *et seq.*; letter from Tushratta, 190; visit to Sidon, 347, 348
Amenhotep IV. = Akhenaten, *q.v.*
Amenhotep, son of Hapu, 112, 113, 126, 286, 287
Amka (Antioch), 407
Amran, Bene, 1
Anastasi Papyrus, 420, 449
Anath, 453
Ankh in hand at end of sun-ray, symbol of Atenism, 255
Ankh. s. en. pa. aten, Ankh. s. en. amen, 273, 390, 394-395, 405 *et seq.*
Apepy III., 14
Arbela, 200
Architecture, Egyptian, in Empire, 131 *et seq.*
Arik-den-ilu, 229
Arnuwandash, 201
Arnuwandash II., 205

The Amarna Age

- Art, Egyptian, in Old Kingdom, 117, 118; in Middle Kingdom, 118, 119; in Empire, 119 *et seq.*; of the Amarna Period, 285 *et seq.*; naturalism in, 288 *et seq.*; decorative, 296, 297; small art, 299, 300; Minoan influence, 300, 301
- Art, Minoan, 164 *et seq.*; compared with Egyptian, 171 *et seq.*; influence on Egyptian, 300
- Artamanya, 209
- Artatama, 77, 198
- Artatama II., 225
- Aruna, 42
- Arvad, 51, 205, 360, 444
- Aryan origin of Hittites, 198; of Mitanni, 208
- Ashtoreth, Astarte, 453
- Ashur, the city, 219; the god, 220
- Ashur-nadin-akhi, 224
- Ashur-nirari, 222
- Ashur-rabi, 26
- Ashur-uballit, 105, 116, 224, 226-229
- Askalon, 381, 443
- Assyria, 20, 26, 210, 216, 219 *et seq.*, 225, 227, 229, 230
- Ast, Princess, 94
- Aten, Atenism, 143 *et seq.*; universality, 248; solar character of, 250; intolerance of, 250, 251, 315; temple at Thebes, 252-254; roots of, in old faith, 303, 304, 313, 314; absence of ethical element, 308, 309, 329, 330; foreign influences, 309, 310; spirituality of, 316 *et seq.*; symbol of, 318, 320; Aryan connections, 319, 320; hymns, 320-333; temples, 334 *et seq.*; ritual, 338-340; reasons of failure, 341; results of failure, 412 *et seq.*; survivals in Egyptian religion, 417 *et seq.*
- Aut, sculptor of Queen Tiy, 290, 291
- Avaris, 13, 16, 17
- Ay, "Divine Father," 241, 293, 324, 410, 411
- Ayrton, Mr. E. R.: discovery of Akhetaten's tomb, 401
- Aziru, 99, 197, 239, 343, 349, 359, 360, 362, 363, 367, 368, 369, 370-373
- Baal, 452
- Baalath, 452
- Babylon, Babylonia, 20, 21, 194, 210, 214, 215
- Bagehot, Mr. W., 81
- Baktaten, Princess, 94, 278
- Balaic (dialect of Hittite), 189
- Barges, sacred, of Egyptian temples, 140, 141
- Beak-jugs, 158, 159
- Beehive tombs, 172
- Beia, 379
- Beirut, 366
- Bek, king's sculptor, 289, 290, 291
- Bekhten, Possessed Princess of, 452
- Berket-el, 113
- Bes, popularity of, 142
- Beth-ninurta, 381
- Beth-shean, stele of Seti I. at, 437, 438; stele of Ramses II., 443, 444
- Beth-shemesh, 209
- Biashshi-ilim, 309
- Bib-khuru riyas (Neb-kheperu-ra [?], Tutankhamen), 407
- Bint-anath, 453
- Biriamaza, 116
- Biridiya, 377, 378
- Bituratu, 203
- Blackman, Dr., 311, 314, 316, 317
- Boghaz-Keui, 9, 187, 189, 190-192, 198, 203, 204, 215, 296, 298
- Breasted, Professor, 15, 32, 60, 67, 72, 83, 144, 150, 170, 290, 304, 312, 316, 319, 324, 332, 417
- Browning, R., 117
- Bucenaur, the, compared with barge of Amen, 141
- Budge, Sir W., 260 *n.*, 330
- Bugash, 208
- Bull-grappling, Minoan, 168
- Burckhardt, 184
- Burraburiash I. of Babylon, 223
- Burraburiash II., 98, 104, 105, 106, 116, 219, 224, 228, 247, 274, 355, 356
- Bur-sin, 220
- Byblos, 113, 114, 349, 350, 358
- Cappadocia, 190
- Cappadocian tablets, 221
- Carchemish, 9, 52, 192, 193, 205, 407, 408
- Carlyle, T., 108, 431
- Carmel, 40, 41
- Carnarvon, Lord, 298
- Carter, Mr. Howard, 394, 405, 409
- Chamollion, 184, 185
- Chariot, Egyptian, 130, 131
- Cilicia and the Keftiu, 152 *et seq.*
- Cities of the Aten, 263
- Code of Hammurabi, 214
- Constantinople, obelisk of Thothmes III. at, 54
- Cook, Dr. S. A., 384, 447
- Cowley, Dr., 183, 185, 191, 193
- Crete, 148, 149; Minoan kingdom of, 20; culture of, 156

Index

- Dakhamun, 273, 406 *et seq.*
 Dapur in Galilee, 443
 Davies, N. de G., 2, 7, 322
 Davis, Mr. T. M., 79, 401
 Delta, ancient cults of, 155, 156
 Denyen, 205
Doomed Prince, Tale of, 61
 Dress, Egyptian, of the empire, 129, 130
 Dudkhallia I., 195
 Dudkhallia II., 195
 Dudkhallia III., 205
 Dudkhallia IV., 205
 Dudu, 362, 363, 369
 Dungi, 220

 Early Minoan, 158, 159
 Edfu, 308
 E-gashan-kalama, 220
 E-kharsaggal-kurkurra, 220
 Elamite conquests in Babylonia, 213
 Elliot Smith, Professor G., 401
 E-mishmish, 220, 222
 Enlil-nirari, 229
 Ephron the Hittite, 183
 Erishum, 221
 Erman, Professor A., 142, 313, 316
 E-sagila, 218
 Esau, 184
 Euphrates, description of, 29; crossing
 of, by Thothmes III., 52
 Euyuk, 185, 206
 Evans, Sir A., 150-152; divisions of
 Minoan culture, 158
 Ezekiel, 268

 Fatherhood of God, sense of, in Egyptian
 religion, 416-418
 Ferakdin, 206
 Fisher, Mr. C. S., 444
 Forrer, E., 189
 Frederick the Great, 431
 Fresco-painting, Egyptian and Minoan,
 164 *et seq.*

 Gandash, 217, 218
 Ganesh, city of, 221
 Garstang, Professor J., 161
 Gaza, 41
 Gebel Barkal, 92, 393
 Gem-aten, 263
 Gezer, 381
 Giaur-Kalessi, 206
 Gilukhipa, marriage of, to Amenhotep
 III., 85-89, 95, 200, 237
 Gina (En-Gannim), 379
 Grebaut, M., 2
 Gubla = Byblos, *q.v.*
 Gudea, 110, 447

 Habiru, 344, 376, 378, 381, 438
 Hadad-zalma, 407
 Hagia Triada, 8; sarcophagus at,
 156
 Halbherr, Dr., 157
 Hall, Dr. H. R., 23, 90, 153, 156, 168,
 169, 170, 172, 189, 191, 208, 209, 295,
 301, 372
 Hamath inscriptions, 184, 185, 437
 Hammurabi, 22, 211, 221; greatness as
 a law-giver, 213, 214
 Hanigalbat, 105, 106, 224, 225
 Hantilish, 181, 194
 Hapi, the Nile-god, 307
 Harakhti, 244, 245, 254, 328
 Harmini, 27
 Harris Papyrus (500), 61
 Harris Papyrus (the Great), 140
 Harrison, Miss Jane, 169
 Harvester Vase, 170
 Hatay, tomb of, 256
 Hathor, 453
 Hatshepsut, Queen, 12, 35, 37-39; obe-
 lisk of, 37; reliefs of, 287
 Hat-suten (Alabastronopolis), 426
 Hattushash = Boghaz-Keui, *q.v.*
 Hattushilish I., 25, 181, 194
 Hattushilish II., 195
 Hattushilish III., 181, 186, 188, 201,
 204-206, 215, 216, 432, 446
 Hauran, stele of Scti I. in, 437, 452
 Heliopolis, Sun-cult at, 306 *et seq.*,
 318
 Hentmerheb, Princess, 94
 Henttaneb, Princess, 94
 Herenkeru, 49
 Herkhuf, 110
 Herodotus, 157, 158, 160
 Hittite, Hittites, 20, 24, 25; empire of,
 180 *et seq.*; in Scripture, 183; terri-
 tory, limits of, 185; tablets, inscribed,
 187; origins, 190; racial types, 192,
 193; empire, collapse of, 205; cul-
 ture and art, 206 *et seq.*; literature,
 207, 208; gods of, 208; raid on
 Babylon, 215; relations with Egypt,
 post-Amarna, 421 *et seq.*
 Hogarth, Dr. D. G., 194
 Hor and Suti, stele of, 311, 312
 Horemheb, 201, 256, 386, 387, 403,
 412; earlier years, 424-426; acces-
 sion, 426; reforms, 427 *et seq.*; treaty
 with Shubbiluliuma, 201, 432
 Hrozný, Professor F., 189
 Huy, tomb of, 385, 403
 Huya, tomb of, 384, 385
 Huzziash, 194
 Hyksos, 12, 13 *et seq.*, 119

The Amarna Age

- Iasily Kaya, sculptures at, 187, 206, 207
 Ikathi, 66
 Ilu-shuma, 221
 Images, absence of, in Aten temples, 339
 Indar (Indra), 208, 309
 Ineni, architect of Thothmes I., 35, 36
 Intermediate dark periods, 117-119
 Irkata, 360, 361
 Isaac, 184
 Ishme-dagan, 222
 Ishtar of Nineveh, 101, 225, 451
 Isin, 213
 Isopata, 172
 Iuaa, 84, 90, 128, 236, 237, 299

 Jerusalem, 209, 380 *et seq.*; holy domain, 268
 Johnson, Dr. S., his views on linen for ladies' wear, 129
 Joshua, 376
 Josiah, King of Judah, 260 *n.*

 Kadashman-Kharbe, 96, 97, 104, 105, 108, 122, 228
 Kadashman-Turgu, 215
 Kadesh (goddess), 453
 Kadesh-Barnea, 344
 Kadesh in Galilee, 439
 Kadesh on the Orontes, King of, 41, 45, 48; capture of city, 51, 52; revolt and recapture, 54, 55; battle of, 185, 203, 442-444; King of, 371
 Kamares pottery, 160, 161
 Kames, 16
 Kanesian (dialect of Hittite), 189
 Kara-khardash (Kara-indash?), 228
 Karnak, 55, 56, 132 *et seq.*
 Kashtiliash, 217
 Kassites, 13, 22; dynasty at Babylon, 190, 211, 212, 217; Aryan origin of, 208; invasion of Babylonia, 217; princess at Egyptian court, 237, 238
 Katna, 99, 444
 Keftiu, 150-152, 444
 Khaemhat, tomb of, 73, 119, 126, 287
 Khafra, 126
 Khana, 218
 Khani, 369, 370
 Khanis (Hanes?), 408
 Khasekhemui, 125
 Khatti, Kheta = Hittites, *q.v.*
 Khetasar (Hattushilish III.), 186, 188
 Khinatum, 116
 Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons, 451
 Khyan, 161
 Kikia, 220
 Kinakhkhi, 98, 116, 117
 Kish, 213

 Kissuwadna, 197, 201; frontiers of, 204
 Knossos, 8, 148, 150, 154, 159, 160, 163, 164, 177
 Kode, 205
 Koldewey, Dr. R., 214
 Kudur-mabuk, 213
 Kurigalzu III., 229

 Labaya, 376-379, 383
 Labyrinth, the Minoan and Egyptian, 160
 Lachish, 381
 Lady of Turquoise, the, 452
 Lagash, 111, 112, 203, 213
 Lamia, 203
 La Roque, 184
 Larsa, 213
 Late Minoan Period, 162 *et seq.*
 Lebanon, the, 49, 73
 Legrain, M. G., 242, 397
 Leo X., 82
 Lepsius, 2
 Lupakki, 407
 Luvian (dialect of Hittite), 189
 Luxor, 93, 132 *et seq.*

 Maat, Akhenaten's devotion to, 209
 Mackenzie, Dr. D., 178
 Magan, 21
 Mahu, tomb of, 282
 Maia, 379
 Maket-aten, Princess, 273, 390
 Manakhate (Manahath-Mahaneh?), 379
 Mandaic (dialect of Hittite), 189
 Manetho, 13
 Manium (Mannu-dannu), 21
 March-Phillipps, Mr., 292
 Marduk, temple of, 218; image of, 218
 Maru-aten, paradise of, 278-280, 298
 Maspero, Sir G., 72, 120
 Mattiuaza, 199, 200, 208, 225-228, 309
 Megiddo, battle of, 41 *et seq.*; siege of, 46 *et seq.*; spoil of, 47, 123, 344, 377
 Melitene, 206
 Melukhkha, 364
 Mena, 21
 Menkheperresenb, chief craftsman of Thothmes III., 56
 Menna, tomb of, 288
 Mentuemhat, 126
 Merit-aten, Princess, 271-273, 278, 338, 389, 392, 393
 Meryra, 282
 Meryra II., 282, 384, 385
 Mesilim, 203
 Middle Kingdom, art in, 118, 119
 Middle Minoan Period, 159, 160
 Milki-ili, 376, 380, 383

Index

- Minoan Empire, 20; culture in, 146, 147; periods of culture, 158 *et seq.*; fall of, 177 *et seq.*; associations with Egypt, 155 *et seq.*; art influence in Amarna Period, 300, 301
- Minotaur, legend of, 169
- Mitanni, Mitannian, 13, 20, 23, 24, 52, 67, 75, 190, 198 *et seq.*; Aryan origin of, 208; dominance over Assyria, 220, 224; Assyrian attempts on, 227, 228; influence in Egyptian court, 237, 238, 375, 376
- Mitrashshil (Mithra), 208, 309
- Montet, M., excavations at Byblos, 349, 350
- Morgan, J. de, 214
- Moses, 209
- Muballitat-sherua, Princess, 228
- Murshilish I., 25, 181, 194
- Murshilish II., 201, 203, 406, 439
- Music in Aten temples, 338, 340
- Mutemuya, Queen, 72, 78, 86
- Mutnezemt, Princess, 426
- Muwattallish, 203, 204, 439, 446
- Mycenæ, 8, 178
- Nabopolassar, 211
- Nabu-sharrak, 218
- Naharina, 33, 37, 52
- Nakht, tomb of, 119, 127, 288
- Nakht-amon, 419
- Napata, Egyptian frontier at, 55, 68, 69
- Napkhuria, Nefer-kheperu-ra = Akhenaten or Amenhotep IV., *q.v.*
- Napoleon and Thothmes III., 57, 58
- Naram-sin, 21, 22, 220
- Nasatianna (the Nasatya Twins), 208, 309
- Nazi-bugash, 228
- Neb - maat - ra Nimmuria = Amenhotep III., *q.v.*
- Nebre, stele of, 419
- Nebuchadrezzar, 211
- Nefer-neferu-aten, Princess, 274
- Nefertiti, Queen, 242, 265, 270, 271, 278, 281, 282-284, 292, 293, 328, 338, 384
- Neferu-ra (daughter of Hatshepsut), 38
- Nesubanebded, 113
- Newberry, Professor P. E.: connections between Crete and Egypt, 155
- Nineveh, 220, 222
- Niy, 33, 34, 37, 53, 66
- Norden, M., 1
- Nubia, conquest of, 27-30, 36; campaign of Thothmes IV. in, 73, 74; of Amenhotep III., 87
- Nuges, 49
- Nukhashshi, 99, 197, 369
- Nymphs (Kara-Bel), 206
- Obelisks: of Thothmes III., 55; of Hatshepsut, 59; Lateran, 74
- Old Kingdom, art of, 117, 118
- Olmstead, Professor, 222, 227, 228
- Oppert, Dr., 2
- Orontes, Valley of, 52, 66
- Osirianism, 304, 305, 307, 416
- Painting, Minoan, 164 *et seq.*
- Pakhanate, 353
- Pakhura, 365
- Pamahu, 116
- Pan-ninua, 222
- Peleset (Philistines), 205
- Pella, 437
- Pentaur, Poem of, 185
- Pepy II., 110, 447
- Per-Ramses, 444
- Petrie, Sir Flinders, 2, 5, 93, 120, 121, 128, 158, 298, 411, 418, 419
- Phaistos, 8, 150, 159, 160, 163, 164; Disk, 154
- Phoenician campaign of Thothmes III., 50
- Pithom, 444
- Pottery, Cretan, 158 *et seq.*
- Proto-Hittite (dialect of Hittite), 189; Period, 194
- Ptolemy Euergetes II., 112
- Punt, 150
- Puzur-ashir I., 221
- Puzur-ashir IV., 223
- Queen, The*, battleship, dimensions compared with barge of Amen, 141
- Ra, Sun-god, 249, 250, 303 *et seq.*
- Rames, tomb of, 255, 261
- Ramses I., 434; titulary, 434; plans, 435
- Ramses II., 181, 185, 186, 188, 201-204, 206, 229, 386, 432, 433, 441; campaign in Asia, 442 *et seq.*; battle of Kadesh, 442, 443; treaty with Hittites, 446; Hauran stele, 452
- Ramses III., 140, 179, 205
- Reade, Charles, 121
- Rekhmara, vizier of Thothmes III., 57, 64; tomb of, 149-151
- Religion, Minoan, 169, 170
- Reshpu, Resheph, 453
- Retenu (Syria), 31, 37, 50, 67, 385
- Rianap, 379
- Ribaddi, 346, 348, 349, 350, 352, 353, 357-360, 361-368, 370-372
- Rim-sin, 213
- Rita*, 209

The Amarna Age

Ritual of Aten temples, 339, 340
Ruskin, J., 80

Sa-Gaz, the, 343, 348, 376, 377
Sahura, 110
Sallier Papyrus, 14, 185
Salmu, 116
Samadu, 116
Samsu-ditana, 215, 216
Samsu-iluna, 215, 216
Sargon of Akkad, 21, 22, 220, 221
Sarpanitum, 218
Satamen, Princess, 94
Sayce, Professor A.H., 184, 406, 407
Scarabs of Amenhotep III.: marriage, 83; hunting, 86; water-festival, 91
Schliemann, Dr. H., 8, 157
Sculpture, portrait, in Egypt, 125 *et seq.*
Seager, Mr. R. B., 157
Sea-Land, Kings of, 215, 217
Seals, Cretan, 159
Sebekhotep, tomb of, 288
Sedeinga, temple of, 92
Seneferu, 110, 447
Senekhtenra, 16
Senmut, 38; tomb of, 149, 150
Sen-senb, 28
Senusert III., portrait-statue of, 286
Seplel = Shubbiluliuma, *q.v.*
Sequen-Ra III., 14 *et seq.*
Serabit-el-Khadem, 452
Sethe, Professor K., 316, 391, 401
Seti I., 229, 386, 433, 435; reconquers Palestine, 436 *et seq.*; steles in Hauran and at Beth-shean, 437; work at Karnak, 439, 440; at Abydos, 440; gold-seeking, 440; character, 441
Shalmaneser I., 229
Shalum-ahum, 321
Shamshi-adad I., 216, 222
Shamshi-adad II., 222
Sharrupsha, 197, 198
Sharuhén, 17, 40
Shaushshatar, 24, 224, 226
Shekhilal, 353
Shemesh-edom, 65
Sherden, 365
Shu-who-is-in-the-Aten, 316, 328
Shubbiluliuma, 25, 181, 197, 198, 199, 205, 208, 225, 227, 228, 235, 247, 273, 309, 345, 346, 359, 373, 406, 407, 410, 432
Shunashshura, 201-203
Shutarna, 85
Shutarna II., 198, 199, 225, 228
Shutatarra, 349
Shuwardata, 209, 310, 380, 383
Sidon, 82, 100, 113, 367, 374

Silsileh, 253, 254
Simyra, capture of, 51, 353-358, 360, 365, 369
Sin, consciousness of, in Egyptian religion, 418 *et seq.*
Sin-muballit, 213
Sinzar, 99
Sippar, 216
Smenkh-kara, 241, 273, 390, 392, 393
Snake-goddess, Cretan, 160
Solar worship in Egypt, 249, 250, 304 *et seq.*
Soleb, work of Amenhotep III. at, 55; of Akhenaten, 92
Sotep-en-ra, Princess, 274
Sphinx (great), tablet of Thothmes IV., 71, 72
Stirrup-vases, 173, 174, 300
Syria, Syrian, 18, 31; wealth of, 47; culture in XVIIIth Dynasty, 123, 124
Sumerian renaissance, 220
Sumu-abum, 213, 220, 221
Sumu-la-ilum, 213
Sun-temples of Vth Dynasty, 334, 335, 338
Surya, Savitri, 320
Suryash, 208
Sutatna, 116
Suti, Sutu, 343, 365
Taanach, 42, 378
Tadukhipa, Queen, 96, 237, 242, 356
Tagi, 376
Tahuti, captain of Thothmes III., 61
Tanis, 113
Taurt, goddess, 142
Taurus Mountains, 206
Teheh-Aten, barge of Amenhotep III., 90, 91
Telibunush, 194
Temples, Egyptian, of Empire, 132 *et seq.*; of Aten at Akhetaten, 334 *et seq.*
Teshub, god of Mitanni, 196, 199
Texier, M., 187
Thebes, name changed by Akhenaten, 257
Thekel, 205
Theseus, 178
Thompson, Dr. R. Campbell, 22, 218
Thothmes I., 18, 28-36; tablets of, 33, 53
Thothmes II., 35, 36
Thothmes III., tablets of, 33, 35; conquests of, 31 *et seq.*, 223; portraits of, 285, 286
Thothmes IV., 64, 71; war in Syria, 73; death of, 79; tomb of, 79, 272, 308-310, 412

Index

- Thucydides, 157, 158
 Tiglath-pileser I., 86
 Tiryns, 8
 Tiw, nurse of Akhenaten, 241, 293, 410
 Tiw, Queen, 79, 83 *et seq.*; 89-92, 94,
 97, 200, 236, 240-242, 251, 282, 283,
 293, 294, 357, 400-401
 Tjarukha, Zarukha, 90, 91
 Treaty of peace, Egyptian and Hittite,
 188
 Troy, 8
 Tuiw, 84, 128
 Tunanat, 99
 Tunip, 55, 57, 370
 Turbasa, 381
 Turbikha, 360, 361
 Tushratta, 26, 77, 95, 97-99, 101, 106,
 196-198, 225, 226, 240, 241, 356-358
 Tutankhamen, tomb of, 4, 5, 241, 273,
 299, 385, 386, 390, 393-395; restores
 Amenism, 396 *et seq.*; campaigns in
 Syria, 402-404; tomb of, 404, 405
 Tutu=Dudu, *q.v.*
 Tyre, 373, 374

 Ulam-buriash, 217
 Umma, 203
 Unas, inscription of, at Byblos, 350
 Ur-engur, 220
 Uriah the Hittite, 184
 Uruwanashshil (Varuna), 208, 309
 Userhet, tomb-reliefs of, 119, 287
 Ushpia, 220

 Varuna, 208, 209, 309
Victory, Nelson's, dimensions compared
 with barge of Amen, 140, 141

 Wace, Mr. A. J. B., on Keftiu, 155, 156,
 178
 Wainwright, Mr. G. A., on origin of
 Keftiu, 152 *et seq.*
 Wan, height of, 52
 Warad-sin, 213
 Washshukkani, 24, 77, 224, 226
 Wawat, 272
 Weigall, Mr. A. E. P., 114, 401, 402
 Wenamon, 113, 350, 412, 450, 451
 Weshesh, 205
 Wilkins (*Hindu Mythology*), 320
 Wilkinson, Sir G., 1, 2
 Winckler, Dr. H., 187, 198
 Wright, Dr. W., 183, 184, 186

 Yankhamu, 358, 360, 363, 379, 380, 381,
 383, 384
 Yapti-adda, 381
 Yarimuta, 351, 364
 Yashdata, 209, 378
 Yehem, 41
 Yenoam, 49, 437
 Yeraza, 40

 Zahi (Phœnicia), 18, 207
 Zakar-Baal, 113, 350, 450, 451, 453
 Zakro, seal-designs at, 168
 Zalmu, 213
 Zefti, 42
 Zeser-ka-ra-senb, tomb-reliefs of, 119,
 127
 Zidantash, 194
 Zilu, 381
 Zimrida, 367, 373, 374
 Zurata, 378, 380

OTHER VOLUMES BY THE REV. JAMES BAIKIE, F.R.A.S.

THE LIFE OF THE ANCIENT EAST

Being some chapters of the Romance of Modern Exploration.
Demy 8vo., cloth, with 32 full-page illustrations from photographs.

Price 10s. 6d. net.

"It gives within a moderate compass a vast amount of information, and it is so written as to interest every reader. In fact, it is a model book of its kind."—*Daily Mail*.

"The book is one of the best popular works called forth by the wide interest in Ancient Egypt."—*Daily Express*.

"It is a book as suitable to the ordinary reader as for the savant; it is a book which one having read it feels that his education has been greatly improved by reading it."

West Lothian Courier.

THE STORY OF THE PHARAOHS

A Short History of Ancient Egypt.

Large crown 8vo., cloth, with 32 full-page illustrations from photographs, and 49 illustrations in the text.

Price 10s. 6d. net.

"While the latest conclusions of archaeological investigation are embodied in the narrative, all unnecessary details are omitted, and the story flows on with ease and rapidity."—*Oxford Magazine*.

"At once popular and scholarly and of great service. The main facts have been woven into a narrative of marvellous vividness, in which accuracy has not in the least been sacrificed to effect."—*Aberdeen Free Press*.

THE SEA-KINGS OF CRETE

And the Prehistoric Civilization of Greece.

Third edition, with 32 full-page illustrations from photographs, a sketch-map of Crete, and a plan of the Palace of Knossos. Large crown 8vo., cloth.

Price 10s. 6d. net.

THE writer's aim in this volume has been to present to the general reader, in an untechnical and readable form, the results of the various explorations which have recently done so much to enlarge our knowledge of the great prehistoric civilization which preceded that of classic Greece, and on whose ruins Greek culture, as we know it, arose. The ancient legends pointing to the existence of a great sea-power in prehistoric Crete are narrated, and a short account is given of the civilization assumed in the Homeric poems. The illustrations represent much of the best achievement of the Minoan race in architecture and art.

LANDS AND PEOPLES OF THE BIBLE

A Handbook for Bible Students.

Crown 8vo., cloth, with 48 full-page illustrations from photographs. Price 5s. net.

"This is a book of great interest."—*Daily News*.

"Mr. Baikie has a clear and graphic style, and altogether this book is a well-written and up-to-date summary covering a wide field."—*Edinburgh Evening News*.

"A volume heartily to be commended."—*Liverpool Courier*.

PEEPS AT ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

Each containing 16 full-page illustrations, 8 of them in colour.
Large crown 8vo., cloth. Each 2s. 6d. net.

NOTE

This Series deals with the lands of the old civilizations, and the aim of the writer has been in each case to put before his readers a series of pictures of the various aspects of life in the great days of each country. The illustrations faithfully depict the life and costume of the period, and include examples of the pictorial and sculptured art, the architecture, and some imaginative scenes from the legends of those old days.

PRESS OPINIONS OF THE VOLUMES

ANCIENT ASSYRIA

"... should prove one of the most valued of the series, and should not fail to catch the attention of any young reader."—*The Scotsman*.

"... a wonderful story, attractively told."

Edinburgh Evening News.

"His glowing chapters should capture the imagination of the duller youngster."—*The Times*.

"... admirably adapted to interest older boys and girls, and will indeed appeal to grown-ups as well."

The Friend.

ANCIENT CRETE

ANCIENT EGYPT

"A most fascinating book, which should find a place in every school library... it is noted for its tasteful get-up, and particularly for the excellence of the illustrations."—*Educational Office Gazette*.

"... is a most fascinating book of absorbing interest."—*Woman Teachers' World*.

ANCIENT GREECE

"... the perusal of this well-written and nicely-illustrated book being a real pleasure. So readable and informing a book, studded as it is with fine and instructive pictures, ought to be in home and school libraries."—*Dundee Advertiser*.

ANCIENT ROME

"... will prove a delightful companion to the tourist, with its map, charming illustrations, and lively (though instructive) letterpress. Others who may never have the delight of visiting the eternal city will enjoy this glimpse of it as the next best thing."—*The Record*.

THE BIBLE STORY

A Connected Narrative retold from Holy Scripture.

With 50 full-page illustrations in colour by J. H. HARTLEY. Super-royal 8vo., bound in cloth. Price 7s. 6d. net.

PRESS OPINION

"It is a real pleasure to handle this delightful book. . . . Mr. Baikie has admirably succeeded in giving the fascinating and immortal story in language that is stately and familiar, while avoiding the two extremes of unintelligible archaisms and undignified colloquialisms of modern speech. The lyrical portions of the historical books are finely rendered in noble and musical verse. . . . There are fifty full-page illustrations in colour by Mr. J. H. Hartley, who made a special journey to the East for the purpose of the book. Their vivid colouring and fine draughtsmanship greatly add to the value of the work."—*The Wesleyan Methodist*.

